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THE AMERICAN SCHOLAR

Volume 24 *WINTER, 1954-55* Number 1

CONTENTS

The Pseudo-Conservative Revolt	*Richard Hofstadter*	9
The True Face of Our Country	*John LaFarge, S. J.*	28
He Was There Before Coronado	*Joseph Wood Krutch*	35
POEMS: Terra Nova, Notes for a Poem, Transformation Scene	*Constance Carrier*	45
The Birth of the Free University	*Carl Anthon*	49
On Writing the Family Novel	*Worth Tuttle Hedden*	65
The Humanities: Mirrors of Genius	*Neal W. Klausner*	81
PORTRAIT: Alvin Johnson	*Irving Dilliard*	88
THE SCHOLAR'S SCRATCH PAD	*Jacques Barzun*	96
THE REVOLVING BOOKSTAND		
Reviews by *Sidney Alexander, Edmund Fuller, Asher Lans,* and *Louis Simpson*		99
Brief comments on fourteen outstanding books of the previous quarter		118
THE READER REPLIES		126

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THE AMERICAN SCHOLAR

VOLUME 24 *Winter, 1954-55* NUMBER 1

The Pseudo-Conservative Revolt

RICHARD HOFSTADTER

TWENTY YEARS AGO the dynamic force in American political life came from the side of liberal dissent, from the impulse to reform the inequities of our economic and social system and to change our ways of doing things, to the end that the sufferings of the Great Depression would never be repeated. Today the dynamic force in our political life no longer comes from the liberals who made the New Deal possible. By 1952 the liberals had had at least the trappings of power for twenty years. They could look back to a brief, exciting period in the mid-thirties when they had held power itself and had been able to transform the economic and administrative life of the nation. After twenty years the New Deal liberals have quite unconsciously taken on the psychology of those who have entered into possession. Moreover, a large part of the New Deal public, the jobless, distracted and bewildered men of 1933, have in the course of the years found substantial places in society for themselves, have become home-owners, suburbanites and solid citizens. Many of them still keep the emotional commitments to the liberal dissent with which they grew up politically, but their social position is one of solid comfort. Among them the dominant tone has become one of satisfaction, even of a kind of

RICHARD HOFSTADTER is professor of history at Columbia University and the author of several books, including *The American Political Tradition*. This article is based on a lecture which Dr. Hofstadter delivered this spring at Barnard College in the second annual series of lectures in American Civilization, devoted to the theme "The Search for New Standards in Modern America."

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conservatism. Insofar as Adlai Stevenson won their enthusiasm in 1952, it was not in spite of, but in part because of the air of poised and reliable conservatism that he brought to the Democratic convention. By comparison, Harry Truman's impassioned rhetoric, with its occasional thrusts at "Wall Street," seemed passé and rather embarrassing. The change did not escape Stevenson himself. "The strange alchemy of time," he said in a speech at Columbus, "has somehow converted the Democrats into the truly conservative party of this country—the party dedicated to conserving all that is best, and building solidly and safely on these foundations." The most that the old liberals can now envisage is not to carry on with some ambitious new program, but simply to defend as much as possible of the old achievements and to try to keep traditional liberties of expression that are threatened.

There is, however, a dynamic of dissent in America today. Representing no more than a modest fraction of the electorate, it is not so powerful as the liberal dissent of the New Deal era, but it is powerful enough to set the tone of our political life and to establish throughout the country a kind of punitive reaction. The new dissent is certainly not radical—there are hardly any radicals of any sort left—nor is it precisely conservative. Unlike most of the liberal dissent of the past, the new dissent not only has no respect for nonconformism, but is based upon a relentless demand for conformity. It can most accurately be called pseudo-conservative—I borrow the term from the study of *The Authoritarian Personality* published five years ago by Theodore W. Adorno and his associates—because its exponents, although they believe themselves to be conservatives and usually employ the rhetoric of conservatism, show signs of a serious and restless dissatisfaction with American life, traditions and institutions. They have little in common with the temperate and compromising spirit of true conservatism in the classical sense of the word, and they are far from pleased with the dominant practical conservatism of the moment as it is represented by the Eisenhower Administration. Their political reactions express rather a profound if largely unconscious hatred of our society and its ways —a hatred which one would hesitate to impute to them if one did not have suggestive clinical evidence.

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From clinical interviews and thematic apperception tests, Adorno and his co-workers found that their pseudo-conservative subjects, although given to a form of political expression that combines a curious mixture of largely conservative with occasional radical notions, succeed in concealing from themselves impulsive tendencies that, if released in action, would be very far from conservative. The pseudo-conservative, Adorno writes, shows "conventionality and authoritarian submissiveness" in his conscious thinking and "violence, anarchic impulses, and chaotic destructiveness in the unconscious sphere. . . . The pseudo conservative is a man who, in the name of upholding traditional American values and institutions and defending them against more or less fictitious dangers, consciously or unconsciously aims at their abolition."[1]

Who is the pseudo-conservative, and what does he want? It is impossible to identify him by class, for the pseudo-conservative impulse can be found in practically all classes in society, although its power probably rests largely upon its appeal to the less educated members of the middle classes. The ideology of pseudo-conservatism can be characterized but not defined, because the pseudo-conservative tends to be more than ordinarily incoherent about politics. The lady who, when General Eisenhower's victory over Senator Taft had finally become official, stalked out of the Hilton Hotel declaiming, "This means eight more years of socialism" was probably a fairly good representative of the pseudo-conservative mentality. So also were the gentlemen who, at the Freedom Congress held at Omaha over a year ago by some "patriotic" organizations, objected to Earl Warren's appointment to the Supreme Court with the assertion: "Middle-of-the-road thinking can and will destroy us"; the general who spoke to the same group, demanding "an Air Force capable of wiping out the Russian Air Force and industry in one sweep," but also "a material reduction in military expenditures";[2] the people who a few years ago believed simul-

[1] Theodore W. Adorno et al., *The Authoritarian Personality* (New York, 1950), pp. 675-76. While I have drawn heavily upon this enlightening study, I have some reservations about its methods and conclusions. For a critical review, see Richard Christie and Marie Jahoda, eds., *Studies in the Scope and Method of "The Authoritarian Personality"* (Glencoe, Illinois, 1954), particularly the penetrating comments by Edward Shils.

[2] On the Omaha Freedom Congress see Leonard Boasberg, "Radical Reactionaries," *The Progressive*, December, 1953.

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taneously that we had no business to be fighting communism in Korea, but that the war should immediately be extended to an Asia-wide crusade against communism; and the most ardent supporters of the Bricker Amendment. Many of the most zealous followers of Senator McCarthy are also pseudo-conservatives, although there are presumably a great many others who are not.

The restlessness, suspicion and fear manifested in various phases of the pseudo-conservative revolt give evidence of the real suffering which the pseudo-conservative experiences in his capacity as a citizen. He believes himself to be living in a world in which he is spied upon, plotted against, betrayed, and very likely destined for total ruin. He feels that his liberties have been arbitrarily and outrageously invaded. He is opposed to almost everything that has happened in American politics for the past twenty years. He hates the very thought of Franklin D. Roosevelt. He is disturbed deeply by American participation in the United Nations, which he can see only as a sinister organization. He sees his own country as being so weak that it is constantly about to fall victim to subversion; and yet he feels that it is so all-powerful that any failure it may experience in getting its way in the world—for instance, in the Orient—cannot possibly be due to its limitations but must be attributed to its having been betrayed.[3] He is the most bitter of all our citizens about our involvement in the wars of the past, but seems the least concerned about avoiding the next one. While he naturally does not like Soviet communism, what distinguishes him from the rest of us who also dislike it is that he shows little interest in, is often indeed bitterly hostile to such realistic measures as might actually strengthen the United States vis-à-vis Russia. He would much rather concern himself with the domestic scene, where communism is weak, than with those areas of the world where it is really strong and threatening. He wants to have nothing to do with the democratic nations of Western Europe, which seem to draw more of his ire than the Soviet Communists, and he is opposed to all "give-away programs" designed to aid and strengthen these nations. Indeed, he is likely to be antagonistic to most of the operations of our federal government except Congressional investigations, and to almost

[3] See the comments of D. W. Brogan in "The Illusion of American Omnipotence," *Harper's*, December, 1952.

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all of its expenditures. Not always, however, does he go so far as the speaker at the Freedom Congress who attributed the greater part of our national difficulties to "this nasty, stinking 16th [income tax] Amendment."

A great deal of pseudo-conservative thinking takes the form of trying to devise means of absolute protection against that betrayal by our own officialdom which the pseudo-conservative feels is always imminent. The Bricker Amendment, indeed, might be taken as one of the primary symptoms of pseudo-conservatism. Every dissenting movement brings its demand for Constitutional changes; and the pseudo-conservative revolt, far from being an exception to this principle, seems to specialize in Constitutional revision, at least as a speculative enterprise. The widespread latent hostility toward American institutions takes the form, among other things, of a flood of proposals to write drastic changes into the body of our fundamental law. Last summer, in a characteristically astute piece, Richard Rovere pointed out that Constitution-amending had become almost a major diversion in the Eighty-third Congress.[4] About a hundred amendments were introduced and referred to committee. Several of these called for the repeal of the income tax. Several embodied formulas of various kinds to limit non-military expenditures to some fixed portion of the national income. One proposed to bar all federal expenditures on "the general welfare"; another, to prohibit American troops from serving in any foreign country except on the soil of the potential enemy; another, to redefine treason to embrace not only persons trying to overthrow the government but also those trying to "weaken" it, even by peaceful means. The last proposal might bring the pseudo-conservative rebels themselves under the ban of treason: for the sum total of these amendments might easily serve to bring the whole structure of American society crashing to the ground.

As Mr. Rovere points out, it is not unusual for a large number of Constitutional amendments to be lying about somewhere in the Congressional hoppers. What is unusual is the readiness the Senate has shown to give them respectful consideration, and the peculiar populistic arguments some of its leading members have used

[4] Richard Rovere, "Letter from Washington," *New Yorker*, June 19, 1954, pp. 67-72.

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to justify referring them to the state legislatures. While the ordinary Congress hardly ever has occasion to consider more than one amendment, the Eighty-third Congress saw six Constitutional amendments brought to the floor of the Senate, all summoning simple majorities, and four winning the two-thirds majority necessary before they can be sent to the House and ultimately to the state legislatures. It must be added that, with the possible exception of the Bricker Amendment itself, none of the six amendments so honored can be classed with the most extreme proposals. But the pliability of the senators, the eagerness of some of them to pass the buck and defer to "the people of the country," suggests how strong they feel the pressure to be for some kind of change that will give expression to that vague desire to repudiate the past that underlies the pseudo-conservative revolt.

One of the most urgent questions we can ask about the United States in our time is the question of where all this sentiment arose. The readiest answer is that the new pseudo-conservatism is simply the old ultra-conservatism and the old isolationism heightened by the extraordinary pressures of the contemporary world. This answer, true though it may be, gives a deceptive sense of familiarity without much deepening our understanding, for the particular patterns of American isolationism and extreme right-wing thinking have themselves not been very satisfactorily explored. It will not do, to take but one example, to say that some people want the income tax amendment repealed because taxes have become very heavy in the past twenty years: for this will not explain why, of three people in the same tax bracket, one will grin and bear it and continue to support social welfare legislation as well as an adequate defense, while another responds by supporting in a matter-of-fact way the practical conservative leadership of the moment, and the third finds his feelings satisfied only by the angry conspiratorial accusations and extreme demands of the pseudo-conservative.

No doubt the circumstances determining the political style of any individual are complex. Although I am concerned here to discuss some of the neglected social-psychological elements in pseudo-conservatism, I do not wish to appear to deny the presence of im-

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portant economic and political causes. I am aware, for instance, that wealthy reactionaries try to use pseudo-conservative organizers, spokesmen and groups to propagate their notions of public policy, and that some organizers of pseudo-conservative and "patriotic" groups often find in this work a means of making a living—thus turning a tendency toward paranoia into a vocational asset, probably one of the most perverse forms of occupational therapy known to man. A number of other circumstances—the drastic inflation and heavy taxes of our time, the dissolution of American urban life, considerations of partisan political expediency—also play a part. But none of these things seem to explain the broad appeal of pseudo-conservatism, its emotional intensity, its dense and massive irrationality, or some of the peculiar ideas it generates. Nor will they explain why those who profit by the organized movements find such a ready following among a large number of people, and why the rank-and-file janizaries of pseudo-conservatism are so eager to hurl accusations, write letters to congressmen and editors, and expend so much emotional energy and crusading idealism upon causes that plainly bring them no material reward.

Elmer Davis, seeking to account for such sentiment in his recent book, *But We Were Born Free,* ventures a psychological hypothesis. He concludes, if I understand him correctly, that the genuine difficulties of our situation in the face of the power of international communism have inspired a widespread feeling of fear and frustration, and that those who cannot face these problems in a more rational way "take it out on their less influential neighbors, in the mood of a man who, being afraid to stand up to his wife in a domestic argument, relieves his feelings by kicking the cat."[5] This suggestion has the merit of both simplicity and plausibility, and it may begin to account for a portion of the pseudo-conservative public. But while we may dismiss our curiosity about the man who kicks the cat by remarking that some idiosyncrasy in his personal development has brought him to this pass, we can hardly help but wonder whether there are not, in the backgrounds of the hundreds of thousands of persons who are moved by the

[5] Elmer Davis, *But We Were Born Free* (New York, 1954), pp. 35-36; cf. pp. 21-22 and *passim.*

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pseudo-conservative impulse, some commonly shared circumstances that will help to account for their all kicking the cat in unison.

All of us have reason to fear the power of international communism, and all our lives are profoundly affected by it. Why do some Americans try to face this threat for what it is, a problem that exists in a world-wide theater of action, while others try to reduce it largely to a matter of domestic conformity? Why do some of us prefer to look for allies in the democratic world, while others seem to prefer authoritarian allies or none at all? Why do the pseudo-conservatives express such a persistent fear and suspicion of *their own government*, whether its leadership rests in the hands of Roosevelt, Truman or Eisenhower? Why is the pseudo-conservative impelled to go beyond the more or less routine partisan argument that we have been the victims of considerable misgovernment during the past twenty years to the disquieting accusation that we have actually been the victims of persistent conspiracy and betrayal—"twenty years of treason"? Is it not true, moreover, that political types very similar to the pseudo-conservative have had a long history in the United States, and that this history goes back to a time when the Soviet power did not loom nearly so large on our mental horizons? Was the Ku Klux Klan, for instance, which was responsibly estimated to have had a membership of from 4,000,000 to 4,500,000 persons at its peak in the 1920's, a phenomenon totally dissimilar to the pseudo-conservative revolt?

What I wish to suggest—and I do so in the spirit of one setting forth nothing more than a speculative hypothesis—is that pseudo-conservatism is in good part a product of the rootlessness and heterogeneity of American life, and above all, of its peculiar scramble for status and its peculiar search for secure identity. Normally there is a world of difference between one's sense of national identity or cultural belonging and one's social status. However, in American historical development, these two things, so easily distinguishable in analysis, have been jumbled together in reality, and it is precisely this that has given such a special poignancy and urgency to our status-strivings. In this country a person's status—that is, his relative place in the prestige hierarchy of his community—and his rudimentary sense of belonging to the community—that is,

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what we call his "Americanism"—have been intimately joined. Because, as a people extremely democratic in our social institutions, we have had no clear, consistent and recognizable system of status, our personal status problems have an unusual intensity. Because we no longer have the relative ethnic homogeneity we had up to about eighty years ago, our sense of belonging has long had about it a high degree of uncertainty. We boast of "the melting pot," but we are not quite sure what it is that will remain when we have been melted down.

We have always been proud of the high degree of occupational mobility in our country—of the greater readiness, as compared with other countries, with which a person starting in a very humble place in our social structure could rise to a position of moderate wealth and status, and with which a person starting with a middling position could rise to great eminence. We have looked upon this as laudable in principle, for it is democratic, and as pragmatically desirable, for it has served many a man as a stimulus to effort and has, no doubt, a great deal to do with the energetic and effectual tone of our economic life. The American pattern of occupational mobility, while often much exaggerated, as in the Horatio Alger stories and a great deal of the rest of our mythology, may properly be credited with many of the virtues and beneficial effects that are usually attributed to it. But this occupational and social mobility, compounded by our extraordinary mobility from place to place, has also had its less frequently recognized drawbacks. Not the least of them is that this has become a country in which so many people do not know who they are or what they are or what they belong to or what belongs to them. It is a country of people whose status expectations are random and uncertain, and yet whose status aspirations have been whipped up to a high pitch by our democratic ethos and our rags-to-riches mythology.[6]

In a country where physical needs have been, by the scale of

[6] Cf. in this respect the observation of Tocqueville: "It cannot be denied that democratic institutions strongly tend to promote the feeling of envy in the human heart; not so much because they afford to everyone the means of rising to the same level with others as because these means perpetually disappoint the persons who employ them. Democratic institutions awaken and foster a passion for equality which they can never entirely satisfy." Alexis de Tocqueville, *Democracy in America,* ed. by Phillips Bradley (New York, 1945), Vol. I, p. 201.

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the world's living standards, on the whole well met, the luxury of questing after status has assumed an unusually prominent place in our civic consciousness. Political life is not simply an arena in which the conflicting interests of various social groups in concrete material gains are fought out; it is also an arena into which status aspirations and frustrations are, as the psychologists would say, projected. It is at this point that the issues of politics, or the pretended issues of politics, become interwoven with and dependent upon the personal problems of individuals. We have, at all times, two kinds of processes going on in inextricable connection with each other: *interest politics*, the clash of material aims and needs among various groups and blocs; and *status politics*, the clash of various projective rationalizations arising from status aspirations and other personal motives. In times of depression and economic discontent—and by and large in times of acute national emergency —politics is more clearly a matter of interests, although of course status considerations are still present. In times of prosperity and general well-being on the material plane, status considerations among the masses can become much more influential in our politics. The two periods in our recent history in which status politics has been particularly prominent, the present era and the 1920's, have both been periods of prosperity.

During depressions, the dominant motif in dissent takes expression in proposals for reform or in panaceas. Dissent then tends to be highly programmatic—that is, it gets itself embodied in many kinds of concrete legislative proposals. It is also future-oriented and forward-looking, in the sense that it looks to a time when the adoption of this or that program will materially alleviate or eliminate certain discontents. In prosperity, however, when status politics becomes relatively more important, there is a tendency to embody discontent not so much in legislative proposals as in grousing. For the basic aspirations that underlie status discontent are only partially conscious; and, even so far as they are conscious, it is difficult to give them a programmatic expression. It is more difficult for the old lady who belongs to the D.A.R. and who sees her ancestral home swamped by new working-class dwellings to express her animus in concrete proposals of any degree of reality than it is, say, for

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the jobless worker during a slump to rally to a relief program. Therefore, it is the tendency of status politics to be expressed more in vindictiveness, in sour memories, in the search for scapegoats, than in realistic proposals for positive action.[7]

Paradoxically the intense status concerns of present-day politics are shared by two types of persons who arrive at them, in a sense, from opposite directions. The first are found among some types of old-family, Anglo-Saxon Protestants, and the second are found among many types of immigrant families, most notably among the Germans and Irish, who are very frequently Catholic. The Anglo-Saxons are most disposed toward pseudo-conservatism when they are losing caste, the immigrants when they are gaining.[8]

Consider first the old-family Americans. These people, whose stocks were once far more unequivocally dominant in America than they are today, feel that their ancestors made and settled and fought for this country. They have a certain inherited sense of proprietorship in it. Since America has always accorded a certain special deference to old families—so many of our families are *new*

[7] Cf. Samuel Lubell's characterization of isolationism as a vengeful memory. *The Future of American Politics* (New York, 1952), Chapter VII. See also the comments of Leo Lowenthal and Norbert Guterman on the right-wing agitator: "The agitator seems to steer clear of the area of material needs on which liberal and democratic movements concentrate; his main concern is a sphere of frustration that is usually ignored in traditional politics. The programs that concentrate on material needs seem to overlook that area of moral uncertainties and emotional frustrations that are the immediate manifestations of malaise. It may therefore be conjectured that his followers find the agitator's statements attractive not because he occasionally promises to 'maintain the American standards of living' or to provide a job for everyone, but because he intimates that he will give them the emotional satisfactions that are denied them in the contemporary social and economic set-up. He offers attitudes, not bread." *Prophets of Deceit* (New York, 1949), pp. 91-92.

[8] Every ethnic group has its own peculiar status history, and I am well aware that my remarks in the text slur over many important differences. The status history of the older immigrant groups like the Germans and the Irish is quite different from that of ethnic elements like the Italians, Poles and Czechs, who have more recently arrived at the point at which they are bidding for wide acceptance in the professional and white-collar classes, or at least for the middle-class standards of housing and consumption enjoyed by these classes. The case of the Irish is of special interest, because the Irish, with their long-standing prominence in municipal politics, qualified as it has been by their relative non-acceptance in many other spheres, have an unusually ambiguous status. In many ways they have gained, while in others, particularly insofar as their municipal power has recently been challenged by other groups, especially the Italians, they have lost some status and power. The election of 1928, with its religious bigotry and social snobbery, inflicted upon them a status trauma from which they have never fully recovered, for it was a symbol of the Protestant majority's rejection of their ablest leadership on grounds quite irrelevant to merit. This feeling was kept alive by the breach between Al Smith and FDR, followed by the rejection of Jim Farley from the New Deal succession. A study of the Germans would perhaps emphasize the effects of uneasiness over national loyalties arising from the Hitler era and World War II, but extending back even to World War I.

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—these people have considerable claims to status by descent, which they celebrate by membership in such organizations as the D.A.R. and the S.A.R. But large numbers of them are actually losing their other claims to status. For there are among them a considerable number of the shabby genteel, of those who for one reason or another have lost their old objective positions in the life of business and politics and the professions, and who therefore cling with exceptional desperation to such remnants of their prestige as they can muster from their ancestors. These people, although very often quite well-to-do, feel that they have been pushed out of their rightful place in American life, even out of their neighborhoods. Most of them have been traditional Republicans by family inheritance, and they have felt themselves edged aside by the immigrants, the trade unions, and the urban machines in the past thirty years. When the immigrants were weak, these native elements used to indulge themselves in ethnic and religious snobberies at their expense.[9] Now the immigrant groups have developed ample means, political and economic, of self-defense, and the second and third generations have become considerably more capable of looking out for themselves. Some of the old-family Americans have turned to find new objects for their resentment among liberals, left-wingers, intellectuals and the like—for in true pseudo-conservative fashion they relish weak victims and shrink from asserting themselves against the strong.

New-family Americans have had their own peculiar status problem. From 1881 to 1900 over 8,800,000 immigrants came here, during the next twenty years another 14,500,000. These immigrants, together with their descendants, constitute such a large portion of the population that Margaret Mead, in a stimulating analysis of our national character, has persuasively urged that the characteristic American outlook is now a third-generation point of view.[10] In their search for new lives and new nationality, these immigrants have suffered much, and they have been rebuffed and made to feel inferior by the "native stock," commonly being ex-

[9] One of the noteworthy features of the current situation is that fundamentalist Protestants and fundamentalist Catholics have so commonly subordinated their old feuds (and for the first time in our history) to unite in opposition to what they usually describe as "godless" elements.

[10] Margaret Mead, *And Keep Your Powder Dry* (New York, 1942), Chapter III.

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cluded from the better occupations and even from what has bitterly been called "first-class citizenship." Insecurity over social status has thus been mixed with insecurity over one's very identity and sense of belonging. Achieving a better type of job or a better social status and becoming "more American" have become practically synonymous, and the passions that ordinarily attach to social position have been vastly heightened by being associated with the need to belong.

The problems raised by the tasks of keeping the family together, disciplining children for the American race for success, trying to conform to unfamiliar standards, protecting economic and social status won at the cost of much sacrifice, holding the respect of children who grow American more rapidly than their parents, have thrown heavy burdens on the internal relationships of many new American families. Both new and old American families have been troubled by the changes of the past thirty years—the new because of their striving for middle-class respectability and American identity, the old because of their efforts to maintain an inherited social position and to realize under increasingly unfavorable social conditions imperatives of character and personal conduct deriving from nineteenth-century, Yankee-Protestant-rural backgrounds. The relations between generations, being cast in no stable mold, have been disordered, and the status anxieties of parents have been inflicted upon children.[11] Often parents entertain status aspirations that they are unable to gratify, or that they can gratify only at exceptional psychic cost. Their children are expected to relieve their frustrations and redeem their lives. They become objects to be manipulated to that end. An extraordinarily high level of achievement is expected of them, and along with it a tremendous effort to conform and be respectable. From the standpoint of the children these expectations often appear in the form of an exorbitantly demanding authority that one dare not question or defy. Resistance

[11] See Else Frenkel-Brunswik's "Parents and Childhood as seen through the Interviews," *The Authoritarian Personality,* Chapter X. The author remarks (pp. 387-88) concerning subjects who were relatively *free* from ethnic prejudice that in their families "less obedience is expected of the children. Parents are less status-ridden and thus show less anxiety with respect to conformity and are less intolerant toward manifestations of socially unaccepted behavior. . . . Comparatively less pronounced status-concern often goes hand in hand with greater richness and liberation of emotional life. There is, on the whole, more affection, or more unconditional affection, in the families of unprejudiced subjects. There is less surrender to conventional rules. . . ."

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and hostility, finding no moderate outlet in give-and-take, have to be suppressed, and reappear in the form of an internal destructive rage. An enormous hostility to authority, which cannot be admitted to consciousness, calls forth a massive overcompensation which is manifest in the form of extravagant submissiveness to strong power. Among those found by Adorno and his colleagues to have strong ethnic prejudices and pseudo-conservative tendencies, there is a high proportion of persons who have been unable to develop the capacity to criticize justly and in moderation the failings of parents and who are profoundly intolerant of the ambiguities of thought and feeling that one is so likely to find in real-life situations. For pseudo-conservatism is among other things a disorder in relation to authority, characterized by an inability to find other modes for human relationship than those of more or less complete domination or submission. The pseudo-conservative always imagines himself to be dominated and imposed upon because he feels that he is not dominant, and knows of no other way of interpreting his position. He imagines that his own government and his own leadership are engaged in a more or less continuous conspiracy against him because he has come to think of authority only as something that aims to manipulate and deprive him. It is for this reason, among others, that he enjoys seeing outstanding generals, distinguished secretaries of state, and prominent scholars browbeaten and humiliated.

Status problems take on a special importance in American life because a very large part of the population suffers from one of the most troublesome of all status questions: unable to enjoy the simple luxury of assuming their own nationality as a natural event, they are tormented by a nagging doubt as to whether they are really and truly and fully American. Since their forebears voluntarily left one country and embraced another, they cannot, as people do elsewhere, think of nationality as something that comes with birth; for them it is a matter of *choice*, and an object of striving. This is one reason why problems of "loyalty" arouse such an emotional response in many Americans and why it is so hard in the American climate of opinion to make any clear distinction between the problem of national security and the question of personal loyalty. Of

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course there is no real reason to doubt the loyalty to America of the immigrants and their descendants, or their willingness to serve the country as fully as if their ancestors had lived here for three centuries. None the less, they have been thrown on the defensive by those who have in the past cast doubts upon the fullness of their Americanism. Possibly they are also, consciously or unconsciously, troubled by the thought that since their forebears have already abandoned one country, one allegiance, their own national allegiance might be considered fickle. For this I believe there is some evidence in our national practices. What other country finds it so necessary to create institutional rituals for the sole purpose of guaranteeing to its people the genuineness of their nationality? Does the Frenchman or the Englishman or the Italian find it necessary to speak of himself as "one hundred per cent" English, French or Italian? Do they find it necessary to have their equivalents of "I Am an American Day"? When they disagree with one another over national policies, do they find it necessary to call one another un-English, un-French or un-Italian? No doubt they too are troubled by subversive activities and espionage, but are their countermeasures taken under the name of committees on un-English, un-French or un-Italian activities?

The primary value of patriotic societies and anti-subversive ideologies to their exponents can be found here. They provide additional and continued reassurance both to those who are of old American ancestry and have other status grievances and to those who are of recent American ancestry and therefore feel in need of reassurance about their nationality. Veterans' organizations offer the same satisfaction—what better evidence can there be of the genuineness of nationality and of *earned* citizenship than military service under the flag of one's country? Of course such organizations, once they exist, are liable to exploitation by vested interests that can use them as pressure groups on behalf of particular measures and interests. (Veterans' groups, since they lobby for the concrete interests of veterans, have a double role in this respect.) But the cement that holds them together is the status motivation and the desire for an identity.

Sociological studies have shown that there is a close relation be-

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tween social mobility and ethnic prejudice. Persons moving downward, and even upward under many circumstances, in the social scale tend to show greater prejudice against such ethnic minorities as the Jews and Negroes than commonly prevails in the social strata they have left or are entering.[12] While the existing studies in this field have been focused upon prejudice rather than the kind of hyper-patriotism and hyper-conformism that I am most concerned with, I believe that the typical prejudiced person and the typical pseudo-conservative dissenter are usually the same person, that the mechanisms at work in both complexes are quite the same,[13] and that it is merely the expediencies and the strategy of the situation today that cause groups that once stressed racial discrimination to find other scapegoats. Both the displaced old-American type and the new ethnic elements that are so desperately eager for reassurance of their fundamental Americanism can conveniently converge upon liberals, critics, and nonconformists of various sorts, as well as Communists and suspected Communists. To proclaim themselves vigilant in the pursuit of those who are even so much as accused of "disloyalty" to the United States is a way not only of reasserting but of advertising their own loyalty—and one of the chief characteristics of American super-patriotism is its constant inner urge toward self-advertisement. One notable quality in this new wave of conformism is that its advocates are much happier to have as their objects of hatred the Anglo-Saxon, Eastern, Ivy League intellectual gentlemen than they are with such bedraggled souls as, say, the Rosenbergs. The reason, I believe, is that in the minds of the status-driven it is no special virtue to be more American than the Rosenbergs, but it is really something to be more American than Dean Acheson or John Foster Dulles—or Franklin Delano Roosevelt.[14] The status aspirations of some of the

[12] Cf. Joseph Greenblum and Leonard I. Pearlin, "Vertical Mobility and Prejudice" in Reinhard Bendix and Seymour M. Lipset, eds., *Class, Status and Power* (Glencoe, Illinois, 1953), pp. 480-91; Bruno Bettelheim and Morris Janowitz, "Ethnic Tolerance: A Function of Personal and Social Control," *American Journal of Sociology*, Vol. IV (1949), pp. 137-45.

[13] The similarity is also posited by Adorno, *op. cit.*, pp. 152 ff., and by others (see the studies cited by him, p. 152).

[14] I refer to such men to make the point that this animosity extends to those who are guilty of no wrongdoing. Of course a person like Alger Hiss, who has been guilty, suits much better. Hiss is the hostage the pseudo-conservatives hold from the New Deal generation. He is a heaven-sent gift. If he did not exist, the pseudo-conservatives would not have been able to invent him.

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ethnic groups are actually higher than they were twenty years ago —which suggests one reason (there are others) why, in the ideology of the authoritarian right-wing, anti-Semitism and such blatant forms of prejudice have recently been soft-pedaled. Anti-Semitism, it has been said, is the poor man's snobbery. We Americans are always trying to raise the standard of living, and the same principle now seems to apply to standards of hating. So during the past fifteen years or so, the authoritarians have moved on from anti-Negroism and anti-Semitism to anti-Achesonianism, anti-intellectualism, anti-nonconformism, and other variants of the same idea, much in the same way as the average American, if he can manage it, will move on from a Ford to a Buick.

Such status-strivings may help us to understand some of the otherwise unintelligible figments of the pseudo-conservative ideology—the incredibly bitter feeling against the United Nations, for instance. Is it not understandable that such a feeling might be, paradoxically, shared at one and the same time by an old Yankee-Protestant American, who feels that his social position is not what it ought to be and that these foreigners are crowding in on his country and diluting its sovereignty just as "foreigners" have crowded into his neighborhood, and by a second- or third-generation immigrant who has been trying so hard to de-Europeanize himself, to get Europe out of his personal heritage, and who finds his own government mocking him by its complicity in these Old-World schemes?

Similarly, is it not status aspiration that in good parts spurs the pseudo-conservative on toward his demand for conformity in a wide variety of spheres of life? Conformity is a way of guaranteeing and manifesting respectability among those who are not sure that they are respectable enough. The nonconformity of others appears to such persons as a frivolous challenge to the whole order of things they are trying so hard to become part of. Naturally it is resented, and the demand for conformity in public becomes at once an expression of such resentment and a means of displaying one's own soundness. This habit has a tendency to spread from politics into intellectual and social spheres, where it can be made to challenge almost anyone whose pattern of life is different and who is imag-

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ined to enjoy a superior social position—notably, as one agitator put it, to the "parlors of the sophisticated, the intellectuals, the so-called academic minds."

Why has this tide of pseudo-conservative dissent risen to such heights in our time? To a considerable degree, we must remember, it is a response, however unrealistic, to realities. We do live in a disordered world, threatened by a great power and a powerful ideology. It is a world of enormous potential violence, that has already shown us the ugliest capacities of the human spirit. In our own country there has indeed been espionage, and laxity over security has in fact allowed some spies to reach high places. There is just enough reality at most points along the line to give a touch of credibility to the melodramatics of the pseudo-conservative imagination.

However, a number of developments in our recent history make this pseudo-conservative uprising more intelligible. For two hundred years and more, various conditions of American development —the process of continental settlement, the continuous establishment in new areas of new status patterns, the arrival of continuous waves of new immigrants, each pushing the preceding waves upward in the ethnic hierarchy—made it possible to satisfy a remarkably large part of the extravagant status aspirations that were aroused. There was a sort of automatic built-in status-elevator in the American social edifice. Today that elevator no longer operates automatically, or at least no longer operates in the same way.

Secondly, the growth of the mass media of communication and their use in politics have brought politics closer to the people than ever before and have made politics a form of entertainment in which the spectators feel themselves involved. Thus it has become, more than ever before, an arena into which private emotions and personal problems can be readily projected. Mass communications have aroused the mass man.

Thirdly, the long tenure in power of the liberal elements to which the pseudo-conservatives are most opposed and the wide variety of changes that have been introduced into our social, economic and administrative life have intensified the sense of powerlessness and victimization among the opponents of these changes and have widened the area of social issues over which they feel discontent. There has been, among other things, the emergence of a

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wholly new struggle: the conflict between businessmen of certain types and the New Deal bureaucracy, which has spilled over into a resentment of intellectuals and experts.

Finally, unlike our previous postwar periods, ours has been a period of continued crisis, from which the future promises no relief. In no foreign war of our history did we fight so long or make such sacrifices as in World War II. When it was over, instead of being able to resume our peacetime preoccupations, we were very promptly confronted with another war. It is hard for a certain type of American, who does not think much about the world outside and does not want to have to do so, to understand why we must become involved in such an unremitting struggle. It will be the fate of those in power for a long time to come to have to conduct the delicate diplomacy of the cold peace without the sympathy or understanding of a large part of their own people. From bitter experience, Eisenhower and Dulles are learning today what Truman and Acheson learned yesterday.

These considerations suggest that the pseudo-conservative political style, while it may already have passed the peak of its influence, is one of the long waves of twentieth-century American history and not a momentary mood. I do not share the widespread foreboding among liberals that this form of dissent will grow until it overwhelms our liberties altogether and plunges us into a totalitarian nightmare. Indeed, the idea that it is purely and simply fascist or totalitarian, as we have known these things in recent European history, is to my mind a false conception, based upon the failure to read American developments in terms of our peculiar American constellation of political realities. (It reminds me of the people who, because they found several close parallels between the NRA and Mussolini's corporate state, were once deeply troubled at the thought that the NRA was the beginning of American fascism.) However, in a populistic culture like ours, which seems to lack a responsible elite with political and moral autonomy, and in which it is possible to exploit the wildest currents of public sentiment for private purposes, it is at least conceivable that a highly organized, vocal, active and well-financed minority could create a political climate in which the rational pursuit of our well-being and safety would become impossible.

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The True Face of Our Country

JOHN LAFARGE, S.J.

WE IN THE UNITED STATES are always glad to inform other peoples of our progress and accomplishments, even if we are at times a little puzzled as to just what items we should send over the Voice of America or relay through the more intimate channels of exchange visitors and students. At the present moment we wish to communicate to the entire world the news of our recent great liberating achievement: the unanimous decision of the Supreme Court of the United States on May 17, outlawing the principle of racial segregation in the nation's public schools. We distributed the news at once by short-wave broadcast in thirty-four languages, and we want to continue telling of this event, because we believe it removes a painful blemish from the true face of our country. This decisive step refutes the gross caricatures which have been spread so widely by Communist propaganda; it corrects unduly pessimistic ideas as to the racial situation in the United States which are currently accepted even in friendly nations abroad. It is quite characteristic that the Soviet press has abstained from mentioning it at all.

We want to do more than merely notify the globe of the event. There is a story in this business, the story of how a right principle does finally win out in a democracy, even though it may take a half-century to gain its point. For our friends we would like to trace the way in which each great political principle contains, as it were, the seeds of its successor and ultimate development. The framers of the Constitution compromised on slavery. But although it was rooted in our institutions, slavery could not resist the grad-

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ual, inevitable impact of our primary postulate that "all men are created equal." Similarly, when we adopted the Fourteenth Amendment in 1868, we embraced a right principle, "the equal protection of the laws," which in time would wipe out the last vestiges of slavery in the form of racial discrimination.

Such a development illustrates what Mr. Henry Cabot Lodge recently referred to as the "irresistible onward march of the human race in the direction of increase of human rights and increased belief in the dignity of the individual." But the human race does not march forward by some blind impulse; it moves ahead because people will it, choose for it to move ahead.

It is not enough for us to inform our bilingual friends about the fact of this forward march; we want also to give them some idea of how it came about. The Emancipation Proclamation that in 1865 destroyed slavery as a legalized institution, though technically the act of one great man, was in point of fact the collective deed of the American people. So too, when on May 17 of this year the Court erased all legal respectability from the last vestiges of slavery, it was the people of the United States speaking. A fair account of the events that led up to that decision would have to recite the bitter lessons we learned as to the price required for the continuation of racial disunity: the toll it has taken in social and political division, retarding the progress of our nation. We would speak of all that our people have learned through new contacts, new opportunities, as well as new threats to civic peace resulting from our enormous internal migrations from country to city, from South to North. And we would need to take ample reckoning of what war experiences have meant for our young people as well as for our armed forces as such; for the recent decision was made against the background of complete racial integration in all three branches of the armed forces, completed only a couple of weeks before May 17.

But the story I should like most to stress for our foreign friends and visitors is that of the great army of the forgotten or even the unknown, those dedicated people who worked in obscurity for the education and the inner development of the racial minorities, par-

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ticularly in the South: Negro educators who overcame extreme personal handicaps of poverty and timidity, who braved the pessimism of their own kith and kin and struggled to build something out of nothing; white men and women who faced violent disapproval, social ostracism, or even personal danger. We should have to include among them people who contributed their time, means and talents to the express task of securing equal opportunity, who were not afraid to demand explicitly full equality for all in our American society regardless of race, color and creed; and, finally, the expert legal staff that actually prepared the decisive material, and the humble contributors who made their work possible.

My aim here is not to pronounce an Independence Day panegyric for all these good men and true, these heroes living and dead; others can do that job more effectively than myself. I do want to emphasize their motives, the fact that these people, with no exceptions worth bothering about, acted from deep, intense conviction. They believed that certain things were right and certain things were wrong, with no if's or but's. They were liberals, yes—liberals in the most weighty sense of the word. As liberals, they believed that human rights inhered in the individual person and could not be entrusted to the whims of politicians or legislators. As liberals, they believed that it was a noble and a necessary thing for men to labor to secure these rights for their neighbors. Some of this action was highly reasoned, some of it instinctive, but in any case it was carried on by those who placed conviction before doubt. They were not the type of people who put their faith in "steadfast" skepticism. They questioned popular errors and misconceptions, but were entirely positive when it came to those basic notions upon which we have built the structure of our nation. Such people are not the most interesting type of liberal; they do not breed aphorisms or soothe wounded feelings, but they get things done.

Moreover, a sizable proportion of this army of workers were religious people, persons who looked upon their striving for justice as the logical corollary of their own religious beliefs. They believed that religion itself speaks with the voice of freedom: not some elaborately rationalized interpretation of religion, but a

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simple faith in the teachings of the Bible as they knew it, in the Law of Moses or the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Their personal liberalism derived no nourishment from an attitude of religious skepticism, however refined.

I have spoken of the plainer people, but these remarks apply to the scholars as well. Popular enthusiasm would have failed of its goal without the patient research of our own American scholarship. Learned people of every section and race contributed. Honest scholarship has paid great dividends to the general welfare in the past forty or fifty years by demolishing ethnic racism, analyzing historical and psychological causes of our current tensions, studying the effect of separatism upon the character, especially of the young, assaying methods of intergroup personality, and, in more recent times, examining the working of racial integration in our schools and communities.

Here again the burden and the heat of the day were carried largely by scientists, historians and sociologists who were not satisfied with endless processes of dissolution and criticism. Their work is distinguished by its positive note. Such a note characterizes one of the most monumental pieces of research, *An American Dilemma* by Gunnar Myrdal, as well as more modest but painstaking jobs, like that of Dr. Kenneth B. Clark and his wife, cited in the recent decision.

The Supreme Court has closed serious debate on the Constitutional issue on which it passed verdict. The elimination of a false solution clears the way now for a nation-wide debate on a vastly larger issue: the manifold question of how we shall learn to live together in peace in all our institutions and communities throughout the nation, and by the same token with all the peoples of the world. With a moot point of law cleared up, the moot point of human co-existence itself remains to be examined. By postponing to later months the consideration of any practical implementation of its decision, the Court indicated that now was the time to begin this discussion. Those of the minority group who were most successful in bringing out the verdict have wisely proposed that the discussion be conducted everywhere upon the local level. Back of that

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recommendation is the belief that the people themselves can find answers to the most vexing questions of group relationships, provided the people who are immediately concerned can converse among themselves in their own neighborhood, without throwing the burden of decision upon experts and agencies from afar. Implicit in that recommendation is the belief that free discussion is precisely the best plan. Let us solve these questions, Negro leaders declared at Atlanta, in the "atmosphere of give and take." It was through half a century of free discussion that we created a climate of opinion which made possible the decision of May 17. In that same atmosphere we shall perfect a climate of opinion which will make possible newer and more positively constructive decisions in the future. Such decisions are particularly urgent, since in a cold war we are obliged to sleep on our arms, in the face of "the narrowing circle of freedom."

What, then, is the role of the scholar in this future period of general debate? Evidently he will need to collect and assess the lessons of the past and evaluate various techniques for developing mutual understanding. Immediate difficulties can be solved at the local level, and locally the different groups can learn to work together for the common good. But the question still remains as to the nature of that common good. People will not stay content merely to put up with one another's peculiarities, or to labor conjointly for the more immediate needs of daily life. They will seek a wider and deeper basis of co-operation; they will seek to know what is the destiny of the nation itself. They will ask what we, all of us, are here on earth for anyhow. They will inquire whether we are anything but an inexplicable accident, whether we are beings who can make free decisions based on a concept of life's ultimate goals—if life, they ask, has an ultimate goal. They will want to know if it is reasonable to talk of ultimates at all; and, if so, how far language is a significant medium for such discussion. They will inquire about the meaning of men's dialogue with one another, and whether all human dialogue may not resolve itself in the last analysis into a dialogue with the God who put us here. Sooner or later they will inquire whether there may not be two participants

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to that dialogue, whether it is all Job speaking to God, or whether God may not be saying something to Job.

This might sound as if I were expecting that the scholars' role in the coming discussion should be that of pronouncing upon matters of religious doctrine. I believe the theologians will have much to say in the future, as they have in the past, but my proposal is more elementary—one that I make, as I see it, in the interests of true liberalism. Scholarship of the future, as concerned with the debates of the future, should be free to study and reappraise the connection between religion—including organized, dogmatic religion—and a liberal policy of universal human rights. Is this proposal unreasonable? Are we obliged to pose the problem of liberalism as a choice between two extremes (I believe artificially assigned extremes): either an uneasy suspicion that some miching mallecho is brewing whenever the theologian enters the universe of discourse, or else a paternal and pious evasion of the pressing questions of the social community?

That we are facing a certain wave of anti-intellectualism and pure utilitarianism is evident enough. But I do not see why this trend should necessarily develop into a tidal wave that will engulf all free thought and free inquiry. I see grounds for such extreme anxiety only in the case of those who have allowed themselves to become fascinated by the intoxication of total doubt and a dogmatically negative attitude toward all normal human moral and religious values. Their hypercriticism earned for them, it now appears, some strange ideological bedfellows. The American people, from my own experience as a worker over the years for certain very urgent questions of human rights, will listen and do listen to the voice of reason when the arguments are presented intelligently and dispassionately. Prejudices may be inborn, a young African said to me the other day, as he was preparing to return to his native country, but in these matters, he insisted, people may be and frequently are born again. There may be giants in the path, but giants, too, are vulnerable, and sometimes flop helplessly in the face of a well-aimed slingshot.

Says the Biblical Wise Man in the Latin Vulgate version: *os*

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bilingue detestor, which may be rendered as: "I have no use for a face that talks with a double tongue." The *os bilingue*, the double-talking mouth or face, has nothing in common with *le monde bilingue*, a world where men can talk straight to each other despite language barriers. It has also nothing in common with the traditional traits of the American people. Despite the clamor of many bitter and angry voices, our country, when it speaks for itself, does speak today, as it has in the past, with a tone of reverence for things holy and with humble respect for the needs of the least human being. I believe that American scholarship will take increasing cognizance of this truth, and so play a powerful part in presenting to the world the true face of our country.

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He Was There Before Coronado

JOSEPH WOOD KRUTCH

ACCORDING TO AN ANCIENT and anonymous jocosity, the bravest man who ever lived was the first who ever ate an oyster—alive.

A more sober judgment might want to make a case for that equally forgotten hero of paleolithic times who first domesticated fire. It must have been one of the first of his achievements in home-making, but no wolf destined to turn into a dog and no buffalo destined to become a cow can possibly have seemed one-tenth so dangerous as devouring flame. Early man, like every other animal, must have long been accustomed to flee from it in abject terror. We shall never know what Prometheus first dared snatch a bit from some forest fire or some erupting volcano. But when he put it down in the middle of the domestic circle he must have said, "This I can tame and use."

Long before even his day, courage of some sort had been a characteristic of living things, and even the tamer of fire was not the first hero. Perhaps the first and greatest of all was whatever little blob of jelly—not yet either plant or animal but a little of both—first consented to take on the responsibility of being alive at all. And surely the second greatest was that plant or animal which first dared leave the water in which, ever since the very dawn of creation, every other organism had been born and died. Men are talking now about journeys to the moon or to Mars, but neither is more unsuited to human life than the bare earth was to the first creatures who risked it.

For millions of years, only the submerged areas of the earth had been habitable. It was in water that the first hypothetical one-celled creatures, too insubstantial to leave fossil remains, must have been generated. None ventured out of it during millions of years

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while stony skeletons were evolved and became the earliest sure evidence of life in some of the oldest rocks. In water stayed also all the worm-like, squid-like, shrimp-like creatures who represented, in their day, the highest development of life.

Meanwhile, during the major part of the earth's history—during considerably more than half the time since life began—all dry land was desert to a degree almost inconceivable, without soil of any kind, as bare as the moon, and subject to no changes except those produced by geological forces. Volcanoes flowed and mountains heaved. Rain falling on an earth without any protecting plant cover washed cruel gullies as remorselessly as they are cut in the most unqualified badlands of today. Had any creature of that time been capable of thought, life in any medium other than water would have seemed as fantastic to it as life without an atmosphere seems to us.

Then at some time—geologists say it was probably something like three hundred million years ago—the first living thing dared to expose itself temporarily to the deadly air. If it was an animal, as some think most probable, then it must have rushed back (or perhaps ducked back) before the gills through which it breathed could dry out. It could hardly have done much more during many thousands of years after the first bold venture, because it could not actually live beyond easy reach of water until its whole anatomy and physiology had undergone fundamental changes. But patience is a quality which the universe seems never to have lacked until man came along, and it was the animal which broke most rashly with all previous tradition that presently became the most highly developed and the most competent, as well as the least patient.

So far as I am concerned, I see no reason to apologize for calling that animal a "hero" or for referring to his "courage." Such terms can have no real meaning except in connection with something which is alive, and when we talk about "the suffering earth" or the "nobility" of a mountain range, we are merely using a figure of speeech. But it is hard to say just where meaning begins or to decide just which animal, or even which plant, is still too simple to be capable of something analogous to daring and courage. If these virtues are real in man, then they are real in him because they began

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to be so as soon as there was anything in the universe which could defy law and habit by risking something which had never been done before.

Few of us are so committed to a merely mechanical behaviorism that we would refuse to call "brave" and "adventurous" the first human pioneers who came to live in the American West. So, in their own way, were the plants and animals who had preceded them there. And so, a fortiori, were those far back in time who first dared learn how to adapt themselves to that desert which all dry land then was. If daring to do what our intelligence recognizes as dangerous constitutes "courage," then the animal who similarly rejects the imperatives of its instinct is exhibiting a virtue at least analogous; and so, in some still dimmer fashion, was the simplest creature, animal or even vegetable, which refused to obey its long-established reflexes. The whole course of evolution is directed by just such courageous acts. It must have its countless, unremembered heroes who created diversity by daring to do what no member of their species had ever done before.

Most scientists, I am well aware, would object strenuously to any such line of reasoning. But then many scientists are firmly convinced that in man himself there is also no such thing as either daring or courage as distinguished from a reflex, congenital or conditioned. And perhaps that conclusion is inevitable if one begins by denying their reality to all creatures "lower" than man. If every other animal is a machine, then why shouldn't human beings be machines also? Hence, if to speak of the "courage" of some very lowly creature is to indulge in exaggeration, it is at least an exaggeration opposite and corrective to a more usual one.

Is it possible, one may ask, to guess at the identity of the first great pioneer and radical who came to dry land? Or is it, like the song the sirens sang, "beyond all conjecture"? Does he have a name? By saying, "But for you and your enterprise I might still be a fish—at least your ancestors provided the food for my ancestors when they came to land," can we give him honor?

Well, if the paleontologists are right—and their evidence seems pretty good—we can answer these questions. As a matter of fact,

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I met only the day before yesterday one of the almost unchanged relatives of our first air-breathing ancestors, and he did not seem especially proud. He crawled on eight legs out from under a board in my storeroom, and I confess that, though I do not do such things lightly, I put my foot upon him. Before he was crushed into nothing, he was about two inches long and pale straw in color. He carried two pincers before him, and over his back he carried a long tail with a sting at its end. He was, in short, one of the least popular of desert dwellers, a scorpion.

Finding out about one's ancestors, especially correlative ones, is often a risky business, and perhaps most people would rather not know how much all of us are indebted to this rather unattractive creature. But so far as geologists can tell from the fossils they study and date, the first animal actually capable of breathing air was not only a member of the scorpion kind but amazingly like the one we step on when we find him.

To even the most uninstructed eye, a scorpion fossilized during the Silurian or Devonian epoch—say, something like three hundred million years ago—is unmistakably a scorpion. If one of them were to come to life again and crawl out of his stone sarcophagus into your desert patio, you would not be particularly surprised by his appearance, unless you happened to be a biologist specially devoted to the study of that group of animals called arachnids to which the scorpion belongs. There are several species now common hereabout—some, like the victim of my brutality, only two inches long and some several times that length. A three-hundred-million-year-old specimen would look, to the casual eye, like merely a sort one had not happened to see before and not much more different from the familiar kinds than they are from one another.

In the highly improbable event that a living dinosaur should be found in some African or South American hiding place, it would create quite a stir in even the popular press, and any big game hunter would count it a high distinction to shoot one. Yet anyone who happens to live in one of the many parts of the earth where scorpions abound can have the privilege of stepping upon a creature who has been going about his business (such as it is) far longer than any dinosaur went about dinosaur business. As a matter of fact,

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scorpions put in their appearance more years before the first dinosaur than have slipped away since the last known dinosaur decided that he and his kind had had their day.

The horseshoe crab and the gingko tree are sometimes called "living fossils," and the epithet has more recently been applied to that strange fish known as Latimeria, which was taken not many years ago off the coast of Australia, despite the fact that it, as well as all its immediate relatives, was supposed to have become extinct a very long time ago. Yet no sort of fish is much older than the scorpion, and the horseshoe crab is not as nearly like any very ancient form as the scorpion in my storeroom is like his Silurian ancestor. He may not be much to look at, but the least we can do is to regard him in the spirit of the naturalist Sutherland when he contemplated the living members of a tribe somewhat less ancient than the scorpions: "If the test of nobility is antiquity of family, then the cockroach that hides behind the kitchen sink is the true aristocrat. He does not date back merely to the three brothers who came over in 1640 or to William the Conqueror. Wherever there have been great epoch-making movements of people he has been with them heart and soul. . . . Since ever a ship turned a foamy furrow in the sea he has been a passenger, not a paying one certainly but still a passenger. But man himself is but a creature of the last twenty minutes or so compared with the cockroach, for, from its crevice by the kitchen sink, it can point its antennae to the coal in the hod and say: 'When that was being made my family was already well established.' " Scorpions have never been as closely associated with man as the cockroach, but they may not consider that anything to be ashamed of, and on the score of antiquity they have a right to snub the cockroaches as upstarts, at least relatively speaking.

It may seem odd that they have hung on so long while changing so little. It may seem even odder that they should be found in deserts despite the fact that they are so similar to the scorpions which had recently left the water. But they do not insist upon dryness, and some species will even tolerate a certain amount of cold. Though there are none in New England or in the Great Lakes region, they do occur in the Alps and, on our continent, as far

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north as southern Canada. On the whole, however, they prefer warm climates, and they have been in the Southwest for a long, long time. Tracks almost precisely like those made by a living species have been found in the Coconino sandstone, which was laid down in Permian times, or not more than a million or a million and a half years after scorpions took the first drastic step out of the water.

Most people today underestimate the intelligence and awareness of most creatures other than man because recent official science has often encouraged them to do so. But the scorpion is probably even dumber than he looks. At first sight you would have no reason to suppose that his senses were much less keen or his awareness much less dim than those of any common insect, but they are. By comparison, even a beetle, to say nothing of a bee, an ant or a fly, is a miracle of alertness and competence. The life which I extinguished when I stepped on my specimen was about as dim as we can imagine life to be. The scorpion's brain stopped growing about the time he left the water, and braininess had not got very far by then.

Neither his habits nor his character are very engaging even as such things go. The young—miniature replicas of their parents—are born alive, and, like the young of the wolf spider, they clamber about on their mother's back until they are old enough to take care of themselves. But maternal solicitude is probably a rather large term to use in connection with this mother's tolerance, and at least until mating time comes around, scorpions do not seem to do anything very interesting. They skulk under bits of wood or stone, and they sometimes choose to hide in shoes incautiously left in their neighborhood. I have never seen a scorpion outside captivity do anything more interesting than nibble rather languidly at the body of a moth which had come to my light.

In fact, watching them closely, even in captivity, does not provide much excitement most of the time. If two or three are kept together, one sometimes absent-mindedly eats a companion, but this cannibalism—which is usual—is probably nothing very deliberate. The poor things not only have a very rudimentary brain but also eye-

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sight probably not keen enough to do more than distinguish the dark corners where they hide from the bright light they avoid, and it is too dim even to make them aware of movement. Probably they do not actually perceive anything they do not touch.

As one observer has put it, if you see two together, then either they are making love or one of them is being eaten. Even anatomically the most interesting thing about scorpions is their curious way of breathing. Insects have, of course, no lungs. They have merely ramifying tubes open to the outside which permit the penetration of air into the body cavity. But scorpions, being even older than the insect tribe, have what are called book lungs—curious purse-like organs which no insect possesses, though spiders, more nearly related to scorpions than to insects, often have both the insect's tubes or tracheae and the scorpion's book lungs. No doubt book lungs—which are a sort of air-breathing gills—were invented close to the water's edge.

So far as I know, no detailed account of the mating habits of the Arizona species has ever been published, but in a creature which varies so little, they are probably the same as those described in Henri Fabre's classic account of those which live in Provence and also, more recently, as the result of some observations made in the Philippines. Male and female stand face to face with their tails raised and their stings touching. The male takes his partner by the claw and then backs away, leading her with him. This holding of hands in a sort of dance may last for more than an hour, after which the couple disappears under a stone or into some other recess, the male walking backward as he conducts his partner. This sounds almost romantic, and it probably does involve a sort of courtship. But the holding of hands is probably necessary, because creatures which are deaf and almost blind can't afford to lose one another once happy accident has brought them together. And though human lovers have been known on occasion to call one another "good enough to eat," we are likely to be shocked when the female scorpion takes this extravagant metaphor literally—as she frequently does.

Even the scorpion's venom is said to be of some very ancient kind quite different from that of the serpent. And for once, a

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creature commonly regarded as dangerous really is, to some slight extent. The largest kind are relatively innocuous and capable of giving, as I have been informed by a friend who knows from direct experience, nothing worse than a wasp sting. But two Arizona species, neither more than about two inches long, can be deadly to small children and may give even an adult several painful days in bed. Records kept at the Arizona State College over a period of nineteen years ending in 1948 charge them with causing sixty-four fatalities during that time—or more than four times as many as rattlesnakes can be blamed for. Naturalists get rather tired of insisting that few animals are dangerous at all and very few indeed anything like so dangerous as we like to imagine them, and it is almost a relief for them to be able to say: Scorpions really do sting, some species really are deadly to small children, and even adults really should beware of them.

Even so, we tend to exaggerate the danger, both because we always do and perhaps also, in the case of the scorpion, because there is something which we recognize as terrifyingly strange in many of the very primitive creatures. Even the so-called deadly sort are deadly only to the very young or the very feeble, and I myself have seen an adult who had been stung by one go back to his work after keeping his finger in ice water for an hour. By comparison with the automobile, for example, they have very little effect upon the life expectancy of any inhabitant of the desert country, even though a human being is more likely to be killed by a scorpion than by a rattlesnake. No doubt men have been killing them on sight at least since the earliest Stone Age. But they must also have been impressed by them, for Scorpio was put among the zodiacal constellations a very long time ago. And it is appropriate that this constellation, rather inconspicuous in the north, becomes very prominent in the summer sky above the desert.

So much, then, for this creature which, only a few pages back, I insisted upon endowing with "daring" and with "courage" when it first ventured upon the land some three hundred millions of years ago. Judged even by the acuteness of its senses, much less by its intelligence, it belongs very low indeed in the hierarchy of life.

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What a long, long way it was from, say, the scorpion's eye—almost too primitive to deserve the name—to the eye of even so primitive an insect as the praying mantis. Yet the fact remains that between the scorpion and man himself the distance is not nearly so great as it is between the scorpion and anything which does not live at all. The difference between seeing, no matter how dimly, and not seeing at all is greater than the difference between the scorpion's vision and ours. It is easier to imagine how, given time enough, a scorpion could become a man than it is to imagine how sea water and mineral substances could have become a scorpion. Primitive as his eye is, it is indubitably an eye. Its owner can see with it, however dimly. And sight in itself is a process beyond comprehension. It involves awareness of some sort. Perhaps the difference between the scorpion's courage and what is possible for us is no greater than that between his eyesight and ours. And who would refuse to use the word "seeing" to describe what even a scorpion can do. Why should we not assume that his courage and ours are no less essentially, though remotely, the same.

Even granting all this, it is, however, still possible to wonder why this once so adventurous creature became so soon a very paragon of conservatism. As the first air-breather he may very well have been the remote ancestor of all the insects who were to proceed from originality to originality until they became capable of achievements which even man cannot wholly grasp. But this prototype of the insect himself continues to crawl upon the desert and to poison human beings with his ancient venom, millions of years after almost all the other creatures which were even his near contemporaries gave up their effort to survive in their original forms. Like the horseshoe crab and the gingko tree, he should have become extinct eons ago. But he has changed even less than they have and has become one of the most striking examples not of evolution, but of a refusal to evolve. Some of the irrational distaste and fear which the sight of him inspires in most people may be the result of their dim half-realization that he comes down from a past too remote not to suggest unimaginable horrors. He is a living reminder of "the dark backward and abysm of time," and like the earliest myths of the human race he suggests the monstrous beginnings of instinct

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and mind and emotion. He is altogether too much like some bad dream, and we do not like to be reminded of it.

As to the mystery of why he is still here, we shall have to be content to put him down as a left-over without knowing precisely how he managed to achieve that humble status. A long time ago he wandered into the desert pretty much what he is now and found that he could survive there, no doubt partly because his demands are modest and he can satisfy them without exposing himself very much. He eats insects, which are plentiful, and he can do without water as well as without food for long periods. Like the members of certain very old human families, he has little to be proud of except the achievements of his remote ancestors; and if he were capable of pride, he might, like them, grow prouder just in proportion as he comes to be more and more remote from them in time. Like such people, he also makes us wonder what became of the virtue that once was in his race. Did the scorpion use up all the daring of his tribe in his one great exploit all those millions of years ago? Perhaps he squandered it all at once like the wits at the Mermaid Tavern, each of whom

> Had meant to put his whole wit in a jest,
> And had resolv'd to live a fool, the rest
> Of his dull life. . . .

It is a pleasant fancy. But one had better not put it into words when there are any paleontologists about. And though we honor the scorpion for his early achievement, we have to admit that he doesn't seem to have done much to be proud of in recent years.

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THREE POEMS

CONSTANCE CARRIER

Terra Nova

Go forward now, explorer: here are lands
whose limits while you love you will not reach—
mountains diminishing against the sky,
a still-retreating sea upon the beach.

This further miracle—exploring so,
uninterrupted, wandering at your will,
look back and see, where your own country lies,
unrealized realms and realms more distant still.

Illumined now by inner and outward light,
they shine, they are made new, they wake and rouse
into a mystery made of a brook
coiled like a rope around a quiet house,

mystery made of a great gaunt oak, a barn—
on these and out of them the brilliance glows.
Only the pigeons, tremulous at their cote,
break on this lucid absolute repose.

Turn from them now, as once from east to west,
and find the calendar, the compass, gone—
the winter scene merged with the summer landscape,
and finches golden on a snowy lawn.

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Notes for a Poem

Green island under the waves,
Atlantis, St. Brendan's Isle,
when your flooded shores were sinking
I fled to safer ground
out of a town that vanished
as the waters curled at my heel.

And now I lean on the sea-wall,
alive here, and alone,
staring into the water,
straining to see the trees
whose branches waver like seaweed
in their new element.

And sunlight, warm on the sea-wall,
goes down in a living shaft,
fainter fathom by fathom,
to that lost land—
drowned too deep for distortion,
lying empty and calm,
lying remote and remembered
under the pillar of light.

The bell in the sunken tower
rocks gently, rouses to sound,
but the sound is locked under the surface,
not for me now to hear.

O scene and season, *beyond*
the shadows of generations
and death, I stand here, coward,
alien, exile, staring
into the marbled waters
over the sea-wall's arm.

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Transformation Scene

"But there is the danger," he said, "of trying to keep
the past alive at the expense of one's own reality . . ."

Returned, a wraith from her defrauded tomb,
she haunts an empty house,
stares thro the window at a scrawl of boughs,
wanders from room to legendary room.

Weightless she roams: with printless fingertips
touches the polished table tops, and looks
at the long rows of books:
turns then and slips

thro an unopened door and past the stair.
Nothing must be neglected: she will check
lest there be change, lest there be flaw or fleck
to dim the house whose keeping is her care . . .

till, in a sunlight grown lackluster, she
who cast no shadow even in full sun,
comes on a mirror where there should be none,
sees her reflection who had none to see—

watches it sharpen, grow opaque and clear,
while silence gathers and like summer thunder
splits the high cupola, swells downward under
a gray light, and explodes upon her ear

here in a house that will not fall but fade
as her own body takes on life once more.
Not she is unsubstantial, but the door
she passes thro, its locks again betrayed.

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She walks on ground grown firm: the house, receding,
dissolves behind her: from a bough she breaks
a branch of blossom, and the branch-end rakes
her arm, her flesh, warm in the sun, and bleeding.

✪ These selections from *The Middle Voice*, to be published on December 28 by Alan Swallow of Denver, are presented here by permission of the author and the publisher.

The Middle Voice is the first book of poetry by CONSTANCE CARRIER, a Latin teacher in the public schools of New Britain, Connecticut. It was chosen as the 1954 Lamont Poetry Selection, a competition for the best manuscript of original poetry, sponsored by the Academy of American Poets for "the discovery and encouragement of new poetic genius." Judges were Louise Bogan, Rolfe Humphries, Randall Jarrell, May Sarton and Mark Van Doren.

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The Birth of the Free University

CARL ANTHON

THE LATE ERNST REUTER, mayor of West Berlin, used to say, "The creation of the Free University is perhaps the most noble achievement of free Berlin." Certainly no one could speak with greater authority on the subject, for without his initiative and courage, his statesmanship and warm, personal interest, there would be no full-fledged university in West Berlin today. Like the Berlin blockade and the air-lift, the Free University has become the symbol of resistance against Communist tyranny. It was born of that same spirit of liberty that under Ernst Reuter's leadership made West Berlin the bastion of the free world.

In the summer of 1948, when plans for a new university free from Communist domination were being worked out, conditions in Berlin were decidedly inauspicious for so bold and expensive an undertaking. By June 24, shortly after the introduction of a new hard currency in West Germany and West Berlin, the Soviet interferences with the transports to West Berlin that had begun three months earlier had developed into a total blockade. During the course of the year, the struggle between the Communists and the free forces in the city assembly and *Magistrat* (city council) was intensified to such a degree that orderly conduct of municipal government became an impossibility. The final split of the city came November 30 when the Communists, with a fine sense for comedy, staged a *coup d'état* at the State Opera House and elected a puppet *Magistrat* of their own. Henceforth Berlin had two governments, two currencies, two educational systems and, logically enough, two universities—for by this time the Free University had already begun to operate.

The famous University of Berlin on Unter den Linden was

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founded in 1810, during the reign of Frederick William III. The man who was directly responsible for its establishment and who infused it with his spirit was Wilhelm von Humboldt, at that time the equivalent of a minister of culture for Prussia. In building this university, after Prussia had lost all but two of her universities by territorial cessions to Napoleon and his allies, von Humboldt was determined to create something new, not just another institution of higher learning. Following a national catastrophe, this new university was to contribute to the moral rehabilitation of Prussia. Education, von Humboldt was convinced, must form man and the citizen, not just the craftsman or the specialist. The good citizen is the free man, the man of character and independent judgment. Therefore, the pursuit of knowledge *(Wissenschaft)* at the universities, in both teaching and research, must be free from state control to a maximum degree. Von Humboldt's noble attempt to build an academic community of free men was not easy to realize—professors being what they are—and his aim to impart a genuine, humanistic education was perhaps already anachronistic; but for more than a century the University of Berlin enjoyed a distinguished reputation for scholarly attainment and academic freedom. The tradition of academic freedom must not be lost sight of in the light of what followed after 1933 and 1945. During the nineteenth century, more than one German professor had boldly resisted attempts by political authorities to encroach on the self-government prerogatives of the universities.

At the end of hostilities in 1945, the University of Berlin, situated in what was now the Soviet sector, was severely crippled from physical destruction and the dispersal of its teaching faculty. Its main building was badly damaged, some of its institutes and libraries were destroyed. The bulk of the Prussian State Library's collections—now deposited in Marburg, where, fortunately, they are accessible to scholars—had been evacuated. The teaching body had been decimated by purges during the Nazi regime (already by 1939, forty-five per cent of the German professors and instructors had been replaced by more "reliable" persons), by the flight of professors before the advancing Red Army, and by postwar denazification. Nevertheless, there remained several outstanding scholars who could have guided the institution through the difficult post-

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war years. Among them were the philosophers Nicolai Hartmann and Eduard Spranger (they were the first to leave when they encountered Soviet methods), the historians Friedrich Meinecke and Fritz Hartung, the philologists Max Vasmer and Fritz Neubert, the sociologist Alfred Vierkandt, and the pharmacologist Wolfgang Heubner. These scholars would have provided the core for a university to be reconstructed and reformed in accordance with the needs of the day.

University reform! After twelve years of dictatorship, war and catastrophe, most of the students, returning disillusioned from the battlefields, were eager for a reform of their universities and stood ready to co-operate wholeheartedly with others, including Communists, toward the common purpose. Some of the professors, especially those who had suffered persecution or exile during the Nazi period, could also be counted upon to support the reform movement. Thus there was no a priori rejection of "progressive" changes or of a "democratization of the German universities," as the Communists called it. The long isolation of the universities from the community, the gap existing between students and professors, the overspecialized curriculum, and perhaps also the social exclusiveness of the students—these were things that cried for a radical change if a genuine reorientation of the German people was to be achieved. And much that was written and spoken at this time on cultural problems by the Communist leaders sounded reassuring and invited participation, even though one could not go along with the party line.

The University of Berlin was reopened in February, 1946, by unilateral Soviet decree. For months several professors, as well as the education officers of the Western occupying powers, had tried without success to have it placed under the authority of the *Magistrat* and thus under four-power control. This is where it technically belonged as a former Prussian institution. Even more serious was the fact that the Russians put the university under the authority of the newly created German Administration for Public Education, of which the leading officials were fanatical Communists who had returned from exile in Russia. Its head, Paul Wandel (whose name lent itself to countless political jokes), actually had Soviet citizenship and was well trained to import Soviet educational methods. The

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authorities made it clear from the outset that the university was a subordinate department of the Administration and therefore could make no claim to the traditional autonomy of German universities.

Any plans which the Soviet Military Administration may have had at this time for "sovietizing" the universities were cleverly disguised. The new rector, the classical philologist Professor Johannes Stroux, served as a respectable façade but lacked power and influence. During this initial phase the Russians tolerated "bourgeois" and non-political figures in many leading positions, making sure, however, that the second in command, who would actually wield power, were Communists. They were also relatively generous with funds and facilities in order to revive cultural life as quickly as possible.

Certain innovations in this early period, however, were harbingers of sinister things to come. Compulsory lectures in so-called "social sciences" which were introduced were out-and-out Marxist indoctrination courses. Although the postwar student generation was certainly not averse to having at last the opportunity, long forbidden by the Nazis, to learn about Marxism, these compulsory political courses, taught by Communist party members, were a totally different matter; and during the first three years the lectures were boycotted as far as possible. Since 1951, these "basic social science courses" (*Gesellschaftswissenschaftliches Grundstudium*) have become an integral part of every student's curriculum in East Germany.

Admission to university study was openly based on political discrimination. Excluded were all former army officers; members of the National Socialist party, the S.A. and S.S.; leaders in Nazi youth organizations; and even children of active Nazis. However, exceptions could always be made wherever an applicant was able to prove his active "anti-Fascist" attitude, past or present. This could be most easily done by taking out a membership card in the Communist party. The admissions policy ignored circumstances and age in individual cases and put a premium on enlisting, at least outwardly, with the political party in power. In future years the social composition of the student body was to be affected even more decisively by the obligatory admission of all graduates of the newly created *Vorstudienanstalten,* or university preparatory schools, in

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which were primarily enrolled the children of workers and peasants. Under the circumstances, it is actually remarkable that the student body remained overwhelmingly anti-Communist during the first three or four postwar years.

But the greatest danger lay in repeated Soviet interference with the work of the student organizations. The Central Council of Berlin Students was forcibly dissolved at the end of the first year because of its opposition to the Communist authorities. In its place the Russians licensed the Students' Working Group, consisting of some two to three hundred members, largely led by young Communists. As its chairman, the Russians—who hoped to use this group as a political instrument—appointed a politically active and irreproachable medical student, Georg Wradzilo. He had just been released from a Nazi concentration camp and was now active in the Christian Democratic party. Wradzilo and many of his colleagues had learned and suffered much from one totalitarian regime, and they were resolutely opposed to any tendencies which might lead to a recrudescence of tyranny under a different color. It seems rather naive that Soviet officials expected a man of Wradzilo's background and character to be a pliable tool merely because he had been anti-Fascist in the truest sense of the word. Within a few months this organization, too, had become unmistakably anti-Communist. On May Day of 1946, its representatives protested vigorously against the decoration of university halls and rooms with Communist flags and slogans. "The university is not a political institution," they declared, and requested that no political symbols be displayed on university grounds in the future. The Russians responded by dismissing Wradzilo and appointing a Communist successor. They threatened severe punishment in the event of further "undemocratic, Fascist" resistance. This direct interference appeared too crude, however, and the Soviet authorities were soon persuaded to permit the election of a new chairman. This resulted in an overwhelming victory for the non-Communist candidate, Otto Hess, also a medical student and active anti-Nazi. As editor of the student paper, *Colloquium*, he was soon to play a major role in the movement to secede to West Berlin.

In succeeding months, the struggle between the students and the authorities became more intense, in view of the increasing discrimi-

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nation against students of "bourgeois" origin. There were incidents almost daily, generally resulting in a setback for the students and for academic freedom. Hess and his colleagues in the Working Group, which represented, after all, only a small minority of the student body, now concentrated on bringing about as early as possible a general, democratic election resulting in a representative student government. The time was not yet ripe for forcing the issue by revolting. Despite the Communist defeat in the Berlin elections in October, 1946, the Western occupying powers were not ready to risk a split with the Russians on a minor issue.

Reluctantly the Communist authorities agreed to student elections in January, 1947, hoping, perhaps, that a large unorganized mass could be manipulated more easily than a small minority of politically versed and determined students. In spite of interferences with the campaign and occasional disciplinary measures against non-Communist candidates, the election turned out to be a smashing defeat for communism. Of twenty-eight elected candidates, only three belonged to the Socialist Unity party (SED), the new German Communist party created by the forced merger of Socialists and Communists. It was this group of student representatives that was to play a decisive role in the coming months and, by its fearless resistance and intelligent leadership, to bring about the establishment of a new university.

There can be no question that it was the students who carried the brunt of the struggle with dictatorship. Most professors suffered the inroads into academic matters without visible protest. Some appeared not to see the iniquities or the dangers ahead. They were apparently convinced that the Communists would never dare to touch them or interfere with their scientific work. One of the very few exceptions was a woman, Professor Else Knake, associate dean of the medical faculty, who openly sided with the students in the battle for academic freedom. She was quickly dismissed, and Professor Solotuchin, the university officer of the Soviet Military Administration, in a speech before the professors sharply criticized the conduct of Frau Knake and warned that any further disobedience would be met with stern measures.

The student council began its work in February of 1947 by officially thanking the Soviet authorities for approving its statutes, and

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promised to work "toward the creation of a true people's university and thus contribute to the construction of a democratic Germany." The task of it members was extremely varied and involved great responsibility. They participated in the admission committees, advised the younger students, and worked toward closer relations between students and professors. But their chief job was to help their *Kommilitonen*—now literally brothers-in-arms—with their pecuniary and social difficulties, procuring food and shelter, reduced fares, part-time employment, and so forth.

At the other universities in the Soviet zone, student councils had also been elected. There, too, non-Communists predominated, though not nearly in such great proportion as in Berlin. The Berlin situation, with its four-power government, permitted greater latitude in political activity and thus undoubtedly spurred the students' initiative and courage.

A month after the new student council had begun its work, it received a harsh jolt from the sudden arrest by the NKVD of four students, including one of its own members, as well as Georg Wradzilo. The student councilors, with unbelievable courage, interceded with Professor Solotuchin. They were told to keep out of such matters and to conduct themselves in such a manner that arrests would not be necessary! The Soviet-licensed German press later announced that the students had been arrested "because of secret Fascist activities." All four students were sentenced in secret trials to twenty-five years of hard labor.

The student paper, *Colloquium*, had by this time become the center of opposition. With biting satire and unrestrained disrespect for authority, this paper, licensed in the American sector, exposed Communist methods in the East German universities and aroused the West to the danger of compromising any further with the totalitarian forces. It warned that the process of sovietizing the universities would continue relentlessly, and that any professor who continued to teach without resisting was willy-nilly helping the Communist cause.

The issue was dramatized when in April, 1948, the editors of *Colloquium*, Otto Hess and Joachim Schwarz, together with Otto Stolz, leader of the Socialist student group, were summarily expelled from the university. The student council again denounced

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an illegal action. In language bordering on death-defying audacity —considering the situation—education minister Wandel was told that his action was "contrary to all legal concepts" and was given ten days either to retract his decision or to initiate hearings regarding the matter. In view of mounting public pressure, this time including most of the professors, Wandel actually ordered a trial by a university disciplinary committee. However, the rector, university senate and disciplinary committee proved utterly impotent in bringing about an orderly procedure or a reversal of the decision.

This was the incident in a long series of clashes that finally precipitated a rupture. A week after the dismissal, a mass meeting of students took place in the macabre ruins of the Hotel Esplanade just within the British sector. The Communist authorities had warned that any students who attended this protest meeting would be expelled from the university. Despite this, the hall was jammed. Amidst tumultous applause, Otto Stolz, one of the dismissed students, demanded the establishment of a free university in West Berlin.

This was of course not the first time the idea had come up. But the dramatic situation of the moment, plus the mounting tension in the Allied *Kommandatura* and in the Allied Control Authority, from which the Russians had abruptly walked out in March of that year, gave tremendous impetus to earlier sporadic efforts in this direction. West Berlin newspapers had propounded the idea for months. A group of Socialists had elaborated plans for enlarging the Technical University in the British sector into a full university. The creation of a new institution, involving tremendous resources and at a time when Allied-Soviet differences were reaching an all-time crescendo, was not a light matter. But when the Berlin assembly (without the Communist vote) passed a resolution ordering the *Magistrat* to take steps toward the erection of such a university, the movement definitely got under way.

This fine resolution did not, of course, provide the means for carrying out the project. First of all, the approval and the support of the Western occupying powers were necessary. The British were at first opposed. They were reluctant to intensify the cold war, and they also perhaps feared future competition for "their" Technical University in Charlottenburg. It is illuminating, for example, to

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recall that the late Lord Lindsay, former master of Balliol College and advisory member of a German commission for German university reform, insisted that "there is no real evidence that the Russians have up to now interfered with the freedom of teaching at the Humboldt University, except possibly in the teacher training department." This view was expressed by quite a few professors at the time, and the writer of these lines has heard several professors of the old University speak in this vein long after the Free University had been created. It was an attitude characteristic of certain scholars who indeed may have been spared direct interference with their teaching and research (especially in technical subjects) and who enjoyed considerable advantages and privileges as a result of being classified among the "toiling intelligentsia." Many of these professors were unable or unwilling to see that their own students had been selected for university study on political grounds and were being increasingly subjected to indoctrination in other departments, and that the University had been deprived of its self-government. Naturally, professors could not express themselves as openly as students, and they could not lightly give up their positions at a well-established university. A further determining factor was whether a professor had his home and his "institute" and library (often the work of a lifetime) in the Soviet or in the Western sectors of Berlin.

The American occupation officials had watched these developments with keen interest but had refrained from overt participation. When it became clear—after a preparatory committee under the chairmanship of Ernst Reuter had been organized—that the Germans were determined to go ahead with the project, General Lucius D. Clay, the United States Military Governor, and his subordinates lent a firm helping hand. Clay appointed an American correspondent, Kendall Foss, to explore the possibilities and "to study appropriate Military Government support for such an undertaking." The latter proposed that a fund of about $6,000,000, accumulated profits from United States Military Government publications in Germany, be placed at the disposal of the *Magistrat* for the project. This was approved, but before the money had become available it had shrunk to one-tenth the amount through the currency reform imposed by the Western occupation govern-

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ments. Even so, this sum—a mere $600,000—proved to be the financial foundation for the entire first year.

Meanwhile the German preparatory committee had begun its work. Besides Ernst Reuter, the committee included representatives of the democratic political parties, three professors, and two students. It was typical that students were equal participants in these deliberations, and from now on, at every phase of the negotiations and at every academic level, student representatives were to take a vital share in planning and managing the University. On June 24, the very day Berlin's communications with the West were cut off, the committee published an "appeal for the founding of a free university." It called on German and Allied authorities for help and asked for the co-operation of private organizations, universities and scholars all over the world. On the same day, a secretariat was set up at a little house on Boltzmannstrasse in Dahlem, only two blocks from the headquarters of the United States Military Government and on grounds formerly belonging to the research institutes of the Kaiser Wilhelm Gesellschaft.

To provide shelter for the University, several buildings of the Kaiser Wilhelm Gesellschaft, held by the Military Government, were "de-requisitioned." A four-story biological laboratory building became the home of the philosophy faculty, and thus the core of the new institution. For the sake of economy, the law and social sciences faculties were merged, and the faculty of natural sciences was incorporated within the philosophy group. The medical faculty was distributed all over the city and was assigned certain hospitals for advanced courses.

During the summer of 1948, the secretariat was the scene of feverish activity. Students and professors vied with each other in the roundup of chairs, books and tables for the empty classrooms. It was literally a start from scratch. Additional lecture-hall space was provided by furnishing a nearby subway car barn with hard seats that resembled a certain medieval instrument of torture (with a similar effect on the incumbent). More comfortable, but much farther away, was the Onkel Tom Theater, offered by the United States Army when not in use for GI entertainment. A lean-to greenhouse was converted into a students' supply store, and a wooden barracks served as the dining hall.

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Books were a more serious problem. There were no large libraries in West Berlin, and those in East Berlin were largely inaccessible to students and teachers of the Free University. The 100,000-volume reference library of the Office of the American Military Government was placed at their disposal, and, together with other collections dispersed throughout the city, there was a library potential of about 300,000 volumes. During the next five years, books poured in from all parts of the world. World Brotherhood, Inc., organized a "Books for Freedom" campaign, yielding some 30,000 books. New books were donated by private foundations and voluntary agencies; surplus textbooks came from bulging college stacks; and Bibles, children's books and travel guides were yielded up by private attics. Somewhere there was good use for everything, and many an unpretentious volume found a grateful owner behind the Iron Curtain.

But all this would have been merely an empty shell without a competent teaching faculty. Only about eight professors and fifteen instructors had signified their intention to transfer from the old university in the initial phase. Where were the rest to come from? Would well-established professors leave their homes and positions in West Germany to fly into a blockaded city and to lecture in an unheated barn? (Some coal was made available by the United States Military Government, but it was not nearly enough.) Could other professors be attracted from East German universities?

In this precarious situation it was fortunate that the eighty-six-year-old Friedrich Meinecke, the dean of German historians and professor emeritus of the University of Berlin, put the weight of his authority and influence solidly behind the Free University. This gave the struggling institution a prestige it would have taken years to cultivate. With remarkable enterprise the executive rector, art historian Edwin Redslob (acting in place of Meinecke, the honorary rector) recruited a teaching faculty seemingly out of nowhere, filling the gaps with part-time lecturers and guest professors. Thus the first semester started off with 26 full professors, 5 associate professors, 2 docents, and 83 lecturers—116 in all. Within a year many outstanding scholars from East German universities and from the West had joined the faculty of the Free University.

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By November, things were ready to begin. Over 5,000 students had applied for admission, but only 2,140 could be placed. Twenty-five per cent of these came from the Soviet zone or East Berlin; in subsequent years this proportion increased considerably. Applicants were screened by admissions committees consisting of one professor, one student representative and one member of the respective profession from the community. Extreme care was taken to avoid injustice; and, on the whole, the work of the student representatives in this first difficult assignment commanded general respect.

The opening ceremony took place on December 4, 1948. Professor Meinecke was unable to attend, but in his recorded speech he blessed the efforts of the students with "grandfatherly" affection. Mayor Reuter added a note of warning: "See to it that our efforts were not for naught, that the founding spirit will not evaporate but continue to inspire coming generations." Thornton Wilder, whose play *The Skin of Our Teeth* was the rage of the hard-tried Berliners, transmitted the greetings of Princeton and Yale Universities, with which he was affiliated.

Just what this "founding spirit" was which Reuter emphasized is easy to understand for anyone who visited Berlin during and after the days of the blockade and the air-lift. The spirit of that gallant struggle transfused every aspect of life and seemed to lift the citizens beyond the plane of ordinary existence. For years after, this spirit carried Berliners through crisis after crisis and steeled their resistance and their will to live in their island city.

It was the spirit of youth of which the Free University was born. The students who had taken the initiative to break away from the University of Berlin were determined to see to it that this, "their" university, would be different from all existing German universities. It was not enough to have a university free from communism; it was to be free from totalitarian tendencies of whatever hue. It was to have a greater degree of autonomy from government influence than any West German university through the creation of a *Kuratorium*, or board of trustees, which would have control over financial affairs. It was to have a more progressive curriculum and a more wholesome atmosphere in teacher-student relations. The traditional monopoly position of the German full professor

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(*Ordinarius*) was to be replaced by a democratic participation of all teachers and students in the affairs of the university. There was to be greater emphasis on good teaching, to be achieved in part through seminars and discussion groups. The university itself was to break through its traditional isolation and become an integral part of the community. In short, the Free University was to be a reformed university, a guiding star in a movement of university reform for all of Germany.

But the most striking characteristic of the Free University, as many American visiting professors have testified, is its political climate. To some academic minds it may seem a paradox that a university should have a political character at all when its students and professors had allegedly left the universities in the Soviet zone to be free from political domination. Politics and science, they may say, should be kept strictly apart. The majority of German professors are *unpolitisch,* and this is perhaps one reason why the German universities succumbed so easily to both the Nazi and Communist dictatorships. But the students and professors who founded the Free University, who had actively resisted tyranny, have one compelling conviction: that, to be maintained, freedom must be won again every day. There is no room for neutrality. This means an active identification with the forces of freedom and alertness toward any recrudescence of reactionism. This attitude takes the form of an active student government and of democratic student organizations. The old *Korporationen,* or fraternities, with their antiquated codes, their social and political exclusiveness, and often their practice of dueling, which have reappeared everywhere in West Germany, have not been permitted to organize at the Free University to this date. That this is so is very largely due to the relentless efforts of its ASTA (*Allgemeiner Studentenausschuss*), or student government.

It was natural, of course, considering the origin of the Free University, that the students would be given a considerable voice in running the University. This was definitely desired by Mayor Reuter, who now became the chairman of the *Kuratorium,* as well as by rector Redslob. To secure the students' rights perpetually, the bylaws of ASTA were made an integral part of the university statutes. These bylaws, implemented by vigorous initiative, made

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the Free University's ASTA the strongest student government in Germany and—as far as is known to the writer—the strongest student government of any university in the world. Student representatives have a seat and vote in every faculty meeting except in professorial disciplinary cases. Two student representatives sit and vote in the University senate, the highest academic body; and one student is a member of the twelve-member board of trustees. And, as already mentioned, students are represented on the admissions committee of every University department.

All this will strike Americans as rather extraordinary and perhaps even dangerous. To understand this unique situation one must bear in mind the European type of student, usually more serious-minded than his American counterpart, and the fact that most German students of this period have gone through a tough school of life, one of war and political disillusionment, that has prepared them for unusual responsibilities. The power and influence wielded by the students is being earned by a considerable personal sacrifice of time and effort and the shouldering of heavy responsibilities. During the five years of the University's existence, this arrangement has worked out amazingly well.

The organs of student government are the *Konvent*, or parliament, composed of one representative for every fifty students, elected annually by the whole student body; the ASTA, or executive branch, elected by the *Konvent*; and the council of elders. This latter body, consisting of ex-student officers, has the specific function of preserving the spirit of the founding period. It acts as a kind of supreme court by guarding the bylaws and by opposing resolutions that are "contrary to the spirit from which sprang the Free University."

The work of ASTA is apportioned among its officers with different "portfolios"—for example, social welfare, finances, foreign relations (with other universities), cultural affairs, publicity, sports, all-German student affairs, and student activities. In Berlin, a city of many economic and social problems arising out of the split and the isolation from West Germany, the work of a student council is necessarily more ramified and complicated than elsewhere. Over half of the 6,000 students now enrolled receive sustenance stipends or other relief. Others need employment, some even working full

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time. The students who hail from the Soviet zone have no home, no income and little of anything else. All the relief work falls on the shoulders of the student councilor for social welfare. It is his job to interview and screen the thousands of applicants for the stipends given by the city and for relief; his recommendations are generally accepted by the city authorities. Once a month, the city treasurer turns over to him the cash payments for the recipients—a sum of over $50,000. Payments to the students are handled by a half-dozen tellers under the supervision of the student councilor. It is easy to see that this big financial operation not only involves a tremendous responsibility, but also represents a full-time job, for which the councilor gets a nominal salary.

Of special significance is the work of the councilor for all-German student affairs. His job is to help refugee students and maintain contacts with democratic elements in the Soviet zone. Most of this work has since been absorbed by the Department for All-German Student Affairs of the Association of German Students. Located in a former private villa near the University and staffed by about twenty enthusiastic student workers, this department carries out the exceedingly important task of keeping open the academic channels to East Germany and aiding hundreds of refugee students and professors. It has accumulated a comprehensive file on the East German universities and colleges, so that it is possible to know not only what courses are being taught today behind the Iron Curtain, but also who teaches them. The department helps some 350 students in Soviet zone concentration camps with food packages, and gives material aid and spiritual comfort to the thousands of students and teachers who come to West Berlin for a brief visit to gain strength for another "term" behind the Iron Curtain.

The question that has frequently puzzled outsiders, as well as some Berliners, is whether the Free University is to remain a temporary institution, a *modus vivendi* during the cold war, or a permanent fixture. If the latter, what will happen to the old University of Berlin? There may have been some doubts regarding the permanence of the Free University during the first year or two. Its finances, in fact, were seriously in doubt. Since then, the *Magistrat* has regularly supported it with an annual subsidy of around $2,000,000, which is today nearly $3,000,000, while the United States

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occupation authorities have regularly helped it along with a subsidy of $500,000 a year. Today there is no question whatever that the Free University is here to stay. The present plan is to develop a complete physical plant so that eventually, when the city is reunited, the old university buildings on Unter den Linden can be given up. This would actually amount to a realization of a pre-World War I project to transfer the university to less crowded quarters in a western suburb. The first step in this direction was the establishment of the Kaiser Wilhelm Institut in Dahlem at the turn of the century.

The question of permanence was uppermost in the minds of Henry Ford II and Paul Hoffman when they visited the Free University in 1951 in order to examine the possibilities for a Ford Foundation grant. They were deeply moved at the sight of the improvised buildings and the manifestation of so much ingenuity and enthusiasm. They quizzed students and professors about conditions at the University and about their experiences behind the Iron Curtain. They obtained the assurance (as far as that is possible) from the city fathers that the Free University would enjoy the permanent support of the city as *the* future university of Berlin. Convinced that a grant to this institution would constitute an excellent "investment in democracy," the Ford Foundation voted $1,309,000 for a library and lecture-hall building as well as for a student dining hall. A small sum was earmarked for certain academic programs such as general education courses, extension courses and tutorial groups. Last June, the library and lecture hall, a gleaming white, modern structure, was officially dedicated in the presence of many distinguished visitors from all parts of the world.

In less than six years, the Free University has become a full-fledged university with six faculties. It occupies about forty odd-sized buildings all over the city, but it has the beginnings of a beautiful permanent campus. Its teaching body is equal to that of any university in West Germany, and its graduates are recognized anywhere, except, of course, in the Soviet zone. Although there are some signs of incipient incrustation from traditions (adopted from outside) as the founder-generation disappears, the Free University is still a fighting university. It will doubtless remain that as long as Berlin is the outpost of the free world.

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On Writing the Family Novel

WORTH TUTTLE HEDDEN

A MORE PRECISE TITLE for this article would be "On My Writing a Family Novel." Having no idea how other authors have gone about the business of writing about their families, I can speak only for myself and take you, a captive audience, through the delays, interferences, interruptions—and stallings—to the execution and the reception of *Love Is a Wound*.

Soon after the book was published, on May 2, 1952, an acquaintance in New York whom I hadn't seen for fifteen years asked me in for lunch because she and her friends were "dying to know who my analyst was." I wrote her that I should have to postpone the lunch until fall but would satisfy her curiosity immediately: I had never been analyzed, but if my novel indicated to the initiate that lying on a couch had solved my personality problems and given me insight into the emotional conflicts of others, then I felt safe in continuing to work upright. I did not tell her that I had *not* felt safe until I had read such letters of approval as she had written me; that between the writing of the first and second drafts of this book, I had considered taking a year out to read authorities on abnormal psychology; that a fortuitous meeting with an eminent psychoanalyst at a dinner party had saved my time—I had described my aunt's symptoms and he had indexed them for me and named the mental illness my parents had looked upon as an individual peculiarity.

But why I wrote this novel about the triangular love affair in my family, why I write at all, would be obvious to any parlor psychiatrist who knew the facts of my life. My aunt's neurosis, my mother's patience, my father's professional frustration were as much a part of

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my childhood as were hominy grits for breakfast, and I was the shy bookworm obscured by four sisters, one an effective intellectual, three as pretty and gay as butterflies. I liked reading, but I did not like inching along in my sisters' shadows and ever sought a way of distinguishing myself. In the sixth grade I found it—my description of Stonewall Jackson at Chancellorsville was considered the best in the class and was printed in the high-school paper. My sisters discovered me, and I decided to be a writer.

At twenty, when I set out for New York and the Pulitzer School of Journalism, my intellectual sister gave me a copy of Samuel Butler's *The Way of All Flesh*. Before I arrived at Penn Station I knew that my first novel would be the autobiographical story of a minister's daughter. I would write it in my lonely spinster vacations from world traveling and reporting.

During the 1920's, when most young writers were publishing novels based on their youth in Midwestern towns or farming communities, I chafed at the bit—and nursed whooping cough, measles, chicken pox and the common cold. Such writing as I did appeared in the casual essay departments of *Harper's* and the *Atlantic*, in book review columns, in new, short-lived magazines or in old, expiring ones. When in the early thirties the youngest of my three children was in school for a few hours a few days a week, I did write an autobiography, but it was not about my past in a parsonage nor was it a novel. It appeared in two issues of the *Atlantic*, and it was called "The Autobiography of an Ex-Feminist."

Having published my new-found credo that a mother's emphasis should be on her family, her personal projects curtailed to her so-called free time, I began writing my novel at the beginning of the new school semester. I made no progress, and my failure was not due to the fact that I had to keep one eye on clock and calendar, but rather to the loss of interest in myself as the heroine. At that time, after fourteen years of being a wife-and-mother in a normal family environment, I had developed a new understanding of and sympathy for my mother in her abnormal milieu and realized that "my" story of the parsonage belonged to her, to my father, and to my aunt. My four sisters, two brothers and I had been mere walk-ons in the tragedy in which those three were enmeshed for thirty-

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four years. From this new angle I struggled through a first thin draft, entitled it *Prism*—because I, the author, looked in turn over each of three shoulders trying to catch the reflections of varicolored emotions—and laid it away for eventual completion when my father and my aunt had followed my mother to peaceful eternity.

But now I had to write a novel. In the superficial writing of *Prism* I had discovered that it is easier for an active mother to write a novel than it is to write an article or a short story. Writing a novel, like knitting a sweater, is an activity that can be put down and picked up with no loss to the finished product. This is more likely to be of help to the novel, because if one's emotions are immersed in it, one's subconscious punches no time clock. I have stared at a blank page on my typewriter while my free hour ticked away, then, while pushing the vacuum or driving the car, seen the incident I'd been searching for unfold before me on carpet or road. (Such absorption of the imagination can be hard on one's loved ones, however. I once drew up at our commuting station and waited for my husband to grab his brief case and dash for the train. He didn't. He wasn't there—and he isn't a little man either. Five minutes later I found him, pacing our driveway in a state of utter confusion. He missed his train and an important conference, and since then I've managed to keep my mind on the domestic job when that job involves others.)

The idea for a second novel had lain dormant for ten years, waiting until what I'd thought of as the autobiographical one was out of the way. In 1928, when I was on the staff of the fourteenth edition of the *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, I was assigned a subject which had been overlooked in previous editions—an explanation of the Oneida Community which had flourished in upstate New York for thirty years, the longest-lived and most socially radical of any of our nineteenth-century communistic experiments. The more I read about it—in the New York Public Library—"the more my wonder grew" that no novelist had made use of these people who were consecrated to the sharing of all possessions, including their husbands and wives, and who leaped to life from their letters and from the contemporary reports of visiting journalists. I had spent two days gathering facts for the short encyclopedic piece; I spent

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two years in research for the novel, and three in converting fact to fiction, writing in odd hours and odd places, wherever and whenever I could find time no one else claimed. In an abandoned pigsty behind a Massachusetts farmhouse we'd rented for the summer, while sitting on a bale of hay with my Corona on an upended grocery box, I typed finis to the third draft. *Wives of High Pasture* was published, reviewed and forgotten in the summer of 1944.

In the fall I blew the dust from that first draft of *Prism* and reread it. Then I tore each page in two and dropped the pieces in the wastebasket. I remembered that suddenly in the middle of the first draft of the *Wives,* the characters had begun to speak and act of their own volition in that imaginary branch of the Oneida Community. Moreover, their habitat could be found on a map. The characters in *Prism* were puppets I manipulated, and their stage could not be bounded by any known river or mountain range.

I also remembered something I'd learned long ago when I was writing short stories. The more unfamiliar the appearance of a person or a place in my mind, the more vivid it became on paper, for before I could describe it to the reader, I had had to describe it to myself. In doing that, I had had to include every salient detail. Depicted from memory, such details, being old stuff to me, were often omitted. I needed a more objective approach to the environment I knew so well. I must see my locale in North Carolina as a stranger would see it, then include in my description the minutiae only a native could know. I must learn more about Carolina flora and fauna, history and politics, than I had absorbed as a child with my nose buried in a book about other people, other places. The reason, I argued, that the parsonages of my first draft had floated in space, their denizens incorporeal, was because I had not moored those several white clapboard houses to unmistakable North Carolina soil. This had, therefore, doomed my phantom-characters to single dimensions which were unable to reveal more than one facet, and that one domestic.

At last, in the spring of 1945, I felt competent insofar as background was concerned, to write *Love Is a Wound*—a new and, to me, perfect title I'd chanced upon in an Edith Rickert translation of medieval French poetry.

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Taking a last fling before I incarcerated myself from ten to two every day, I went out to lunch. There the maternal conversation veered from choices of colleges for offspring to the deficiencies in Westchester public schools, one cause of which, it transpired, was the increasing number of Negro students. And on to the whole plethora of generalizations about Negroes—"They're so undependable." "They're so careless." "They're dirty." In the North now, as in the South of my childhood, the housewife's indictment of a race is based on her experience with a few untrained members of its working class.

I tried to put it all out of my mind. There were enough good Negro writers now who could speak for their race more effectively than I. But would Westchester matrons read their books? As prejudice increased in the North with the increase of the Negro population, did it not behoove anyone who had anything to say in behalf of the Negro to say it? And what Northern white writer knew the old-fashioned Negro as well as I did, what Southern liberal knew "the New Negro" as well? I knew too all the nuances of white prejudice, North and South, and I had delved deeply enough into modern anthropology to know the scientific facts about race. True, with the exception of a succession of beloved Negro maids, I had had no contact with Negroes since I'd left New York in 1923 for the suburbs. If I *did* write a controversial novel, its locale would have to be the Negro college in which I had taught two semesters in the early twenties, when I'd thought most of my writing would be about the Negro in America. I packed away the voluminous notes for *Love Is a Wound* and began to evolve a story to dramatize my thesis that it is the individual we have a moral right to condemn and not his nationality, his religion or his race.

A full year, after the publication of *The Other Room* in 1947, was taken up with resulting correspondence, reviewing books about the South and/or the Negro, and speaking. In May of 1948, I set out my typewriter in the study that proceeds from the Bantam edition of *The Other Room* had built—away from the house, with no telephone connection—to write, to write until I completed a third draft of a novel about my family.

I sat there for half an hour or more for three mornings in a row,

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staring at the keyboard. Then I went to the garden to dig—and to think. Why couldn't I begin? What was blocking me? I thought I had overcome my inhibitions in 1939, when, after my father's and my aunt's deaths, I'd told my three sisters and one brother still living in the South about *Prism* and they had made no objections. There wasn't even a cousin left—or so I thought—in my mother's family line.

But there were other vulnerable relatives I had been refusing to think about when I considered this novel. Of my father's eight siblings, two sisters and two brothers were very much alive in western North Carolina, the eldest eighty-eight and the youngest seventy-two, all of them still forceful and effective in the county my Connecticut great-grandfather had helped settle after the Revolution. And to them my father was less my parent than their adored and revered elder brother, his character and his reputation as solid and inspiring on their horizon as Grandfather Mountain. Any reduction of the granite of my father's personality to the pliable clay an author must work with in private would be violently resented.

Then why not take David, the character I would fill in from the contours of their brother Herndon, out of "the cloth," and make him a lawyer or a businessman? I argued as I dug. The latter idea I discarded immediately, for no alchemy of which I was capable could convert such an idealist into a cotton broker. But law *had* been his first choice, and now, as when I used to listen to his sermons, I could see him at the bar as clearly as in the pulpit. But in a lawyer's home, even in the small Southern town, there is *some* privacy, and one of the poignant aspects of the tragedy in our family had been that tragedy's enactment to a crowded house. Then I could make him an Episcopal rector rather than a Methodist minister—a thin disguise, certainly, but one which might appease my aunts and uncles a little. Ah, but Episcopal rectors could stay for life in a town; it was the enforced "movings" and my mother's having to explain her sister's headaches and despondency to a new audience every two or three years that had made the bearing of that neurosis harder for her.

The simplest way to get around the whole difficulty would be to

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give up the idea of a Southern novel entirely, throw out all my notes, and set my stage in the North! After all, I had written one book with a Northern setting, and I had lived in the North twenty-nine years. And there was that ex-patriot cousin in whose Massachusetts parsonage I had once visited. But he had held the same pastorate for fourteen years, and had I known I was in a parsonage that week? Had the front door been opening every few minutes, a voice calling, "Hello, you all! What're you doing?" And would not a Northern husband and wife lack, even in the Victorian era, that exaggerated sense of duty to kith and kin which to this day characterizes Southerners and which prevented my parents' "doing anything about Sistuh"? (Not long ago a redoubtable lady from Vermont, a fan of mine since the publication of *The Other Room*, came to see me. I wondered why she still talked about my second novel, didn't mention my third. I knew why, finally. "I'm proud to know somebody," she burst out as she was leaving, "who can think of as many things to say as you said in *Love Is a Wound*, but I may as well tell you, it was all I could do to finish it, I got so mad at those people! Why didn't David and Ellen *do* something, a crazy person like Ora in their home?")

I could not change David's profession, denomination or habitat; and because of the contrast between eastern and western North Carolina in physical geography, speech, habits and social outlook, I wanted to stick to the facts in my mother's Brunswick County plantation and my father's farm-with-slaves backgrounds. The only surface changes I could make would be in the composition of the families into which they had been born and in the family which they created. Instead of two sisters, Ellen would have only Ora; instead of eight siblings, David would have only one sister and one brother on the scene; instead of their own seven children, who could overrun a novel as surely as they had overrun a parsonage, I would give them only three—two girls and a boy—and I would explain Ellen's unfruitfulness in those pre-contraceptive days as due to what used to be called "some female trouble." But without Ellen's frequent pregnancies, would Ora's hope of someday becoming David's wife have sustained her as long as it did? Might she not have accepted one of those early suitors—and so, happily, left me

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with no story to tell? Besides, I needed youth throughout the book to relieve the gloom of the elders' unhappy situation. At least—and I remember saying this aloud to myself in exasperation—Ellen does not have to have seven! She can have five—four girls and one boy—and one pregnancy that ends in a stillbirth.

And so, after three days of working and thinking in the garden, my locale was where it had been in fact, my hero was what he had been in life, but the flowerbeds were neat and I had only five children to handle—and handling children on paper, I do assure you, is more trouble than actual baby-sitting. That phalanx of opposition in western North Carolina, I told myself, was made up of only four individuals: my Aunt Mell, though still erect and awesome when I had seen her three years before, had not terrified me as she had when I was a child; my Uncle John, like any kindly old man, had reminisced about my father as the only one of the children who could stand up to their father; my Uncle George, the only member of the family not given to reading, probably had not read a novel in his life and would hardly begin with mine. It was my Aunt Lelia, my father's adored baby sister, returned to Caldwell County in '38 after thirty years teaching in China, of whom I was really frightened. But I, too, adored her, corresponded with her. I would write her of my plans immediately, write her of their progress, quote to her what the late Mary Austin had once said to me: "If we don't write about our relatives and friends, whom in heaven's name can we write about?"

But why worry about all this now? Maybe this novel would never be published. I had refused a contract for it, wanting no editorial meddling until I had finished it in my own way. Now I felt that I held a crystal ball which at any moment might slip from my hands and break into a thousand pieces. And if it did not do that, it would, eventually, be merely typed words on reams of paper bearing no resemblance to the novel of my imagination, to perfection in execution. And if on reading those cold, typed pages with all the objectivity I could muster, I decided they were publishable, there was still a chance that my publishers would not agree with me. Now I could only write it, be relieved at last of its burden in my consciousness.

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On the day I thus cleared my psyche for action, my husband said he had to go to Wilmington, North Carolina, for a three-day conference. Why didn't I come along, spend my time in Southport? I might pick up a lot about my mother's and my aunt's youth that would be useful. I said that I knew enough, that there was nobody there who could tell me anything, that I'd be delighted to go. Here was a reprieve from the actual writing.

So, in May, 1948, I went to Southport on what I thought was just a sentimental journey. I left my bag at the Camellia Inn, and in the heat of early afternoon walked to the courthouse to look up family records. Except for the macadam pavement laid in deference to the machine age, all was as I had known it as a child. Spanish moss hung from live oaks that had not shrunk an inch, ferns and ivy grew as luxuriantly between branches and trunk, and sand as penetrating and adhesive as ever filled my sandals. The grass of the courthouse green was still thinned in spots by other children playing there; the outer doors were wide open as usual; all office doors locked as usual at this hour; county officers were at home taking naps as usual. I walked on along the deserted main street, inhaling the clean salt air from Brunswick Sound and the good shrimp smell from the new canning factories at the edge of town. I went in the post office. It might have been 1904 or 1884. Flies buzzed over the government notices, the marine insurance calendar, the tide schedule. A little old lady with bright red hair peered at me curiously from behind the grating of the stamp window, but said "Good evening" as though I came in every afternoon at this time. (Two months later she stepped, uninvited and unexpected, into Part I of my novel, introduced herself as Miss Taffy, a Mistuh Adrian's fiancée, and gave me the episode of the skeleton house—as much of a surprise to me as, in her story, the gift of the blooded mare was to David, that mare on which my narrative progressed for quite a distance.) I asked her, in the flesh that day, whether the library was still in the old Garrison. She said it certainly was and if somebody named Beth had finished her siesta, it would be open now.

I strolled across the walled enclosure which soldiers of George III had used for parade. Through the open windows in the white

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brick of the one-time officers' quarters, I heard a babble. I stood on the threshold until the last child's book had been stamped. The crowd around the desk romped out and the smooth pink-cheeked, golden-haired, blue-eyed doll behind the desk looked up. "Good evening," she said. "What can I do for you?" I told her I was here looking up family history, that my mother had been Ella Swain Wescott.

She jumped to her feet, rushed at me, embraced me, kissed me. "Cousin Ella's daughter! Now which one are you?" I told her. "Cousin Worth! From New York! Why, Cousin Carrie Doshier told me about you once—married to a Yankee and living way off up there! But I don't believe you have the least i-dea in this world who I am!" I confessed that I hadn't, said I hadn't been in Southport since 1910, wondered that she could remember Cousin Carrie, who'd died in 1922. "Oh, I'm older than I look, I reckon. They say the Fountain of Youth's in Southport. I'm Beth Grimes, and the Grimeses and the Swains and the Wescotts and my mother's people, the Knoxes, are all mixed up. I reckon you and I're sixth cousins, but it may be even closer than that. We'll trace it on Cousin Gusta's family tree—that's Cousin Augusta Crepon Roberts, her father was French descent. You must remember *her*. She still talks about visiting Cousin Ella and Cousin Herndon in a whole string of parsonages." Before I was born, I said, but I did remember hearing my mother speak fondly of "that Gusta Crepon." "Well, you'd just waste your time messing around in those dusty courthouse records. Cousin Gusta's seventy-something and Cousin Mattie Sims is a hundred and twelve. Her memory's beginning to fade a little, but between them you can find out everything you want to know. Now soon's I can leave here, we'll get your bags and take them to our house. Mama's gone but Papa and I still live in that old place on the Sound. I'll bet you'll remember it when you see it. You must've been there a lot when you were little."

In the next hour three women came in the library. I would have thought them middle-aged until they began reminiscing about my parents sixty-odd years ago—my mother's charm and gaiety, my father's consecration and good looks. They mentioned my aunts too, the one who'd died young, the one who lived to be eighty-

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three; but if they knew of the misery of that long life, they didn't give a hint of their knowledge.

The next three days when I wasn't reading local history in the library, I was listening to it. Cousin Gusta walked me about the town, opening shuttered doors, introducing me as Cousin Ella's "child," opening vistas on the past until the youth of my parents and my aunt became as real to me as my own had been, until they became persons in their own right, were no longer middle-aged and elderly as I remembered them. Just before I left, I told Beth and Cousin Gusta that I was writing a novel about the triangular love affair in our family. I wasn't sure how much they knew until I saw embarrassment in Beth's doll-like face. Her only comment was that she wished I'd call Southport "Bayport," a name she'd always thought it should have had. But Cousin Gusta squeezed my hand. "Child," she said, "I'm so glad, so glad. Your mother should get her just reward some way."

Back in my study in early June, I began writing this novel which I thought would be only a little longer than my other two, less than three hundred pages. But now I knew that I could not release my new feeling of identity with my protagonists by looking over their shoulders. Each of them would have to tell his or her own story. The truth of the oft-repeated "to know all is to understand all" is exemplified whenever we lend an ear to one person involved in a quarrel, then to the other. Looked at and listened to with detachment, here are the same individuals, the same place, the same time, the same conflict, yet the story told in turn by the antagonists is a different story, and our aroused sympathy, perhaps given *in toto* to one, might switch to the other or become divided between the two.

A frank friend who didn't like this novel as a whole said generously, "But it was sheer genius to begin with Ora, otherwise there could've been no sympathy for her at all." The idea that the plain common sense of beginning the story from Ora's angle could be described as genius seemed nonsensical to me. If genius were, as Carlyle and others have defined it, merely an infinite capacity for taking pains, there would be plenty of that ineffable, undefinable stuff in this effort of mine—over and over and over again I wrote

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passages of consciousness to eliminate author's stage directions and, in Parts II and III, to keep verbs present when the scene was in the present; passages of dialogue in order that the reader could get what he needed to know by eavesdropping. Throughout the writing I tried to follow Stephen Crane's achieved ideal: to put on paper life itself rather than a semblance of it.

Writing the second draft, I kept in mind the definition of fiction most recently, I think, reiterated by Bernard DeVoto in his *The World of Fiction*: ". . . fiction is of people, things happening to them, and their feelings about the things that happen," and threw out page after page based on all that collateral reading of politics and history. (Flaubert, a commentator said not long ago, read seven hundred books in order to write one paragraph in *Salammbô*. I think that commentator was not a fiction writer. Had he been, he would have realized that perhaps Flaubert had intended using a great deal more of that information but had, like lesser novelists, discovered that it got in the way of his characters' development.) In the third draft of *Love Is a Wound*, as I delved deeper into personality, even more of the environment I had read about, not remembered or imagined, fell away. I was amazed when *Time*'s reviewer said that I spoke "with authority about the post-reconstruction South."

Another facet of background bothered me in writing the original draft: the Negro. Having proclaimed myself a champion of human rights in *The Other Room*, how could I ignore the South's dilemma in this book? But *The Other Room* was primarily a thematic novel; this one was not. Negroes could appear in it only when they appeared in the thoughts and activities of my characters. To some of them, major and minor, Negroes would be servants only, not human as white people are human; to others they would be individuals, with individual personalities and aspirations. And again I was amazed when I read the conclusion of Mr. Lewis Gannett's review: "Set Mrs. Hedden down as a rare Southern novelist who can tell a Southern story in which the race question appears incidentally, seen without over-dramatization and with sympathy, from conflicting points of view, evolving and changing with the generations." There Mr. Gannett told me what, I realized, I had wanted

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to do but what, in my most sanguine flights of fancy, I shouldn't have thought I could do.

The third initial difficulty had to do with those children whose number and sex I thought I had settled once for all. In Part II, the one son I'd decided upon had turned out to be, to me, a charming little boy; grown to manhood in Part III, David's third of the novel, he was a nuisance. The treatment of a man's relationship with his only son is theme enough for an entire novel; it could only be touched on in a novel devoted to a man's involvement in the emotions of two women whose conflicts sprang from his relationship with them. The son would have to be the stillborn baby. Eliminating him from the text of Ellen's story was a major operation.

When I'd decided I must have five girls in the book, I had not intended to use my sisters and myself as models, and had chosen names as different from our own as possible. But when Beth grew up and assumed the role of the eldest in an American family with a sense of responsibility toward her younger sisters, she closely resembled the older sister I had known. In the second daughter I needed a rather elemental character who, not given to reading, observes and interprets the people around her with unclouded eyes and who would further the unfolding of my plot by her uninhibited speech. Such a type reached its perfection in my second oldest sister; I could not improve on what nature had provided. In life, as in this novel, Beth attracted the intelligent; Cindy, the bird-brained. In order to present a well-rounded picture of a small Southern town, Fair and Gladys must bring in the large nucleus of simply "nice people," and who could do that more effectively than my other two sisters? And when Ann Wesley, self-conscious and unsure of herself, stepped out on the porch to speak to Ellen, I saw myself—and held on to myself for the later exposition of the rather comical and fanatical feminist I became.

Is all of the foregoing true, or am I merely trying to cover up creative laziness by the use of ready-made material? I don't know. Katherine Ann Porter, writing in her new book of essays about Edith Sitwell's detailed explanation of the fashioning of her poetry, says: "It makes good sense—that good sense the artist can always

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make of his intentions and methods *after* he has done the work. It is an endearing habit artists have, and I find nothing so enthralling as to hear or read one telling how he does it. For practical purposes he might as well try to communicate his breath for our use."

I do know that all the minor characters, from the sadistic Miss Ryder in Part I to the steward's kindhearted wife in Part III, were imaginative. Their names are true North Carolina names but scrambled among the fictitiously named small towns to prevent local readers from thinking they can spot the owners. I do know the truth of the general construction: I laid the foundation and based the framework in solid fact, plastered the walls and furnished the rooms imaginatively. I, for instance, had never heard or, by chance, overheard my parents discuss the cause of my aunt's neurosis, but as I typed out their dialogue, I had a feeling that what Ellen said and David said was close to what my mother and father would have said had they talked as much in life and to the point as characters in a novel must talk to make a novel. Have you ever realized that there would be no novels, no novelists, if writers were truly realistic?

As I put on paper the sympathy I had felt for my parents after I became adult, their suffering became my suffering. I cried with Ora in Part I, felt her frustration and loneliness throughout the writing. Somewhere, sometime, I had read that if an author becomes so intimately identified with his characters that he can't treat them with cool objectivity, if he laughs or cries with them, his readers will not, and may feel no emotion at all. Not until my agent and my editor read the manuscript did I feel sure of its publication.

Before I signed the contract I invited my three sisters up to read a carbon copy. "Fair" and "Cindy" came. Fair suffered as much in the reading as I had in the writing but would not have me change a word. Cindy wasn't much interested until she came upon her fictional prototype in Part II. Then she laughed and said I certainly had her down pat. When "Gladys" read an advance copy of the book, she wrote that she was proud of me; later I heard she wished I had shown more clearly that our mother had made a happy home for us in spite of it all (something I had taken pains to do) and that she wished I could write a novel without putting colored people in it. She lives in a county that is seventy-five per

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cent Negro, gives aid and encouragement to the colored P.T.A., woman's club and library, and is generally revered for her maternal kindness to the colored poor. What my brother thought, I have not heard, beyond a repeated comment that he was glad he wasn't in it.

After Cousin Gusta read the book, she wrote me:

Having known and loved you all, your story holds great charm for me, making me re-live those years of my past when I was nothing but a bad little worry-wart, pestering the very life out of your father and mother when they were courtin', taking my little hassock and setting it down at their feet wherever I could find them, in the parlor or in the summer house. Watermelon time, your father washed my face with a piece of watermelon and oh, how mad I was! I threw everything at him that wasn't nailed down. You know they were good—they let me live and let me come to visit them time and time again when I was a young lady and in spite of Miss Lou's trouble, I was never happier than when I was at the parsonage.

Cousin Beth and the other Brunswick County cousins I'd met were pleased too, several of them thanking me for having got the very essence of Southport, where people live simply and live long. The only one of my father's many nieces with whom I've kept in touch said in a letter which was a long review:

Your achievement in handling the material, so drenched as it is in personal emotion, is masterful and the universal is revealed because the individual human is so completely realized. You caught up all this which was your own background and rendered it so completely into "a fiction" that I never found myself turning your characters back into Uncle Herndon, Aunt Ella, and Miss Lou. I like it so that Ellen and David came to such clear-sighted comprehension of their problem that Beth's psychoanalysis seemed to their living understanding utterly pedantic. It was as though she had brought a candle into an already lighted room—it was the Greek poet, Capetanakis, who said so rightly, "Psychoanalysis explains things but it does not give their meaning. . . ." Some of our cousins in North Carolina feel that you gave Uncle Herndon feet of clay and are incensed; Uncle John wants you to know that the cruel carriage accident of which you make good fiction use did not happen on High Brighten but on a level road and that the carriage was never endangered; Uncle George talks about reading it but never will; Aunt Lelia is reading it now but I haven't heard her verdict. But you should see Aunt Mell rocking and reading, shaking her head and saying,

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"Tut, tut" or, "*I* don't remember any such scene as that"—but nobody can get the book away from her.

Then came the letter I trembled to open, from Aunt Lelia:

. . . There are three copies of *Love Is a Wound* in the Lenoir library and a woman putting a copy in the Thursday Book Club brought it out here to have me write a bit in it about you and your relation to this family and community. I wish I could talk to you about parts of it. I was in China most of the time you cover from 1908 to '38 and I am confused as to what is fact and what is fiction. I remember Miss Lou vividly from the few times I saw her and I feel that you did a wonderful piece of work with her as Ora. Ellen and David are new folks to me—especially Ellen. Did your mother really dislike coming up here to Herndon's old home? Of course I know that your picture of Kathy is something of a composite of all your paternal aunts. Only in the traits I liked in her did I see myself! Don't ever disillusion me! It's a great story, Worth, well told.

These pre-publication and advance copy readers were my most-to-be-feared critics. After *Love Is a Wound* was published, my hands didn't tremble once when I opened magazines and newspapers and turned to the review columns.

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The Humanities: Mirrors of Genius

NEAL W. KLAUSNER

THE MAJOR INTEREST we have in the liberal arts is with man and his achievement. But it is not the abstraction "man" that concerns us. For it was not man that wrote *Hamlet*, but Shakespeare; not man that composed *Don Giovanni*, but Mozart; not man that painted the "View of Toledo," but El Greco; not man that completed the *Summa Theologica*, but Thomas Aquinas. It is the human being together with his creation that draws and compels our admiration and study. The humanities, a general name for such studies, describe a sensitive, imaginative, reflective being, who is puzzled by his own existence, by its promises and frustrations; who reaches out for friendship and love; who is eager to try the powers which he feels moving within him. It is in the humanities we discover that a man can never be adequately understood merely by an examination of what he is at any given moment in history. He is what he was and what he wills to be. He is a being able to take the requisite action needed to transform the actual by reference to the ideal. His history can never be written perceptively in physical, physiological or sociological terms alone. Without the pertinent vocabulary of aspiration he is minimized, distorted and misconceived.

One of the recurring problems in modern education is the reassessment of the humanities. Sometimes this is forced upon us from the outside, by the criticism of business, vocational or technological interests. But more frequently it stems from the tortured consciences of the humanists themselves. They are surrounded by a world demanding immediate and obvious results for payment rendered, and cannot avoid asking themselves what "cash value"

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their work has. This, however, is neither persecution nor self-abasement. It is, rather, opportunity and a sign of health.

If the humanists ever become smug or resentful of criticism, if they protect themselves by a kind of intellectual snobbery, or if they refuse to reappraise their contributions in each generation, then the seeds of their own destruction are sprouting. We must be prepared, willing, even eager, to espouse our devotion to humanistic education. Our case is never made out once and for all, like the multiplication table. We are men, seeking to become better men in all the ways a man can become better. What the humanities have achieved has come slowly and laboriously through centuries of refinement. It can be lost in an instant atomic death, or by an uncritical contentment with the past record. It can be regained only by the arduous struggle up the steep ascent and out of the cave.

But there are, it seems to me, honorable and dishonorable ways of conducting this defense. I am not, for example, impressed with the argument which defends the humanities because they promise to make a better man out of a mediocre one, or even a worse one. They may do so, but then again they may not. In any case it is unwise to consider them primarily as therapeutic agencies. It is not necessary to justify the humanities only if they fulfill some noble or lofty purpose beyond themselves. That they have had this effect in individual biographies is no doubt true, but an illiterate man may be a good man and even a happy one in some senses of the terms *good* and *happy*. Hitler is supposed to have loved his Wagner and to have painted on canvas as well as on clapboard, neither of which can be said to have made him into a decent representative of the human race. When I listen with absorbed attention to a Brahms symphony, or read with profound identification from *The Brothers Karamazov*, or view with persistent delight the color patterns of a Cézanne, I do not feel or wish to feel the silent chemistry which may be transforming me from an animal into a man, or from a boor into an intellectual, or from an indifferent citizen into a candidate for the school board. Try teaching the humanities as if they were a cure for a malady and you will become the victim of a worse illness yourself. Try studying them only because they promise richer sweets and they become sour.

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There is a tendency among the teachers of the humanities to be greatly encouraged when business executives express their approval of the liberal arts education. When a director or manager of some vast enterprise says he needs men of character, with broad training, able to supervise people and to think effectively, and in possession of a solidly based sense of values, and that these ends are achieved primarily by a study of the humanities, then we think our work has received its ultimate justification. But has it? Suppose none of these ends were achieved by the humanities, or no more so than those studies which have vocationalized our education. Would this mean that the humanities had failed? Certainly in part. But I wish to defend the idea that the humanities are best thought of as ends in themselves, rather than means; man has the capacity for sheer personal enjoyment and satisfaction, and finds this deeply in the arts, literature, philosophy, history and any other subject that expresses man by telling of his birth, struggle, achievements, decay and death. Why should we think it necessary to defend man's interest in himself? Or why should we think such knowledge must be vindicated only by leading us to other interests, such as building up bank balances, inventing refrigerators, raising hybrid corn, or winning friends and influencing people?

I do not mean that the justification of the humanities lies only in a psychological state called enjoyment, which may be induced by almost any slight titillation of the senses. If this were so, our culture would have reached its culmination in the comic book, the juke box, and the "art" calendar. But we know there is a difference between a surface manifestation of sorrow and mutual grief; between minor irritation and mutual hatred; between momentary attraction and mutual love; between effervescent gaiety and mutual joy. And this gives us the clue. A prolonged and comprehending study of the humanities may bring about an experience of mutuality between creator and perceiver so that the agony and joy of the creation is repeated again and again whenever the two meet in understanding. Here is the silver cord that unites man with man, nation with nation, past with present. This is why Plato is no longer an aristocratic Greek philosopher, nor Jesus a humble Jewish prophet, nor Dante an exiled Italian poet, nor Dostoevski a tor-

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mented Russian author, nor Beethoven a deaf German composer. They belong now to every mind that recapitulates their existence, or perhaps it is better to say they belong to any age in which they are rethought. This is the truth Emerson spoke in the lines:

> I am owner of the sphere,
> Of the seven stars and the solar year,
> Of Caesar's hand, and Plato's brain,
> Of Lord Christ's heart, and Shakespeare's strain.

If I can think Plato's thoughts as he thought them, love my fellowmen as Jesus loved them, hear Beethoven's music as he heard it, this is enough. I do not need to find a practical excuse for these aims. Indeed, is it not absurd to search for one, and a symptom of misunderstanding to feel the need of one?

And yet there is danger in this too. The resuscitation of the past can never be more than an interpretation. For Plato was speaking to fourth-century Greek intellectuals, Jesus to a small first-century sect expecting the end of the world, and Beethoven within the context of early nineteenth-century German culture. We cannot literally make this past our present. Nor should we try to do so. The humanities do not worship the past, nor merely re-create it. Rather, they develop it. They are the natural issue of a being whose biography is never finished. If we only rehearse the past, we merely preserve it, and this is stagnation. To keep Socrates and Buddha and Michelangelo, we must in some sense be each of them; but we must also be ourselves, for we do not share their times or places. The task of the humanities is unending. Its goals are always to be reached, never finally won. There must always be something to be seen in this generation that previous artists have missed, something found that earlier historians have passed by, something said that no literature has quite expressed, something thought that philosophers have not yet drawn from their premises. But the results will be fragile and thin unless they emerge from the living past. How deeply the humanities rely upon the memory—the memory not only of the private mind, but that made public and substantial in libraries, galleries and museums. This generation must take care lest it lose both its memories.

But there is another misconception, and we must not be trapped

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by it. When I suggest that the humanities may lead to an experience of re-creation between one mind and another, or between one age and another, it may be thought that the necessary relation between knowledge and preparation is minimized in favor of a leisurely, passive absorption. The original work, already fashioned by the labor of genius, offers itself now to lesser minds who are able to comprehend it by casual reflection. This curious and utterly mistaken view that the humanities are simply ways of appreciation, which one can postpone or avoid until there is nothing better to do, is based on the false premise that the humanities are the hobby subjects of the curriculum, which call for no rigorous preparation but only personal interest and a distaste for exactness. This seems to be the attitude of many of the educationists in our day, who are responsible for sending into the schools of the nation teachers almost totally blind to what is human in the human situation. The results are sadly evident in the first year at college. No, the humanities cannot be passively absorbed. Their knowledge must be earned by effort, their truths mastered by the critical intellect.

It is true that we do not have glass tubing and Bunsen burners, or microscopes and slides, or cyclotrons and spectroscopes; nor do we find very useful statistical tables and correlation coefficients, all of which are designed to give a rigor and trustworthiness to the claims to knowledge of the social and natural sciences. Of course we do have grammar and logic, dictionaries and encyclopedias, and other aids to the disciplined intelligence. But there is a difference. Anyone who is skilled in the use of the instruments of a science is quite probably a scientist of considerable stature. But one may be extraordinarily facile with all of the apparatus of the humanities and still be shallow or empty of either knowledge or understanding of humane learning. We must look to the humanities to free us from methodolatry and prepare us for the great gifts of genius.

For the humanities live on in the geniuses of the race. It is not their function to perpetuate mediocrity. The legions of the dead past are sifted exceedingly fine by the criticism of time, and we may become intimate with only the best—a privilege not open to their contemporaries. The point is that art lives on art, literature on literature, and philosophy on philosophy. This is of course true

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also of science when it does not sever itself from human concern. But in our day there are signs that it may become subject to that which will destroy it—secrecy. A secret art or literature or philosophy is a self-contradiction. No less is a secret science. There have been and still are absurd attempts by official bodies, ecclesiastical and political, to restrain the natural life of human achievement and insight. So far they have not triumphed. We are not yet molded by an official philosophy, nor condemned to a party-line literature. But at least we know about these dangers. They are not absolutely foreign to us. Thus in some sense they are already present.

There is a legend concerning Donatello, that he struggled to prolong his death agony so that his friends would have time to replace the tawdry crucifix on his breast with one of Brunelleschi's. This could well be taken as the symbol of each passing generation, which in its last gestures repudiates the cheap, trashy and base, and which, by yearning for and grasping the fruits of genius, assures them of survival in the next generation. It is the service of the humanities to keep man alive: not as medicine keeps him alive; nor as a strong weapon keeps him alive merely by frightening off an attack; but as purpose, love, hope, aspiration and creation keep him from returning to the non-human wilderness from which he has emerged and which will claim him again if he lapses too far.

What I have said may seem contradictory. I have tried to point out that the humanities are seen in a false light if they are regarded primarily as a means to fashioning a certain type of man, much respected in our day, or as a remedy for overcoming undesirable weaknesses in men. And I have also argued that the province of the humanities is man—man at his best, man revived and renewed by the processes of re-creation and understanding. This is not a contradiction, though it may be a paradox. A contradiction leads us nowhere. It is like a journey which can never be taken because it can never get started. A paradox is like a journey which always brings us back home, but after which we are never quite the same traveler and home is never quite the same home. It is in this sense that we can deny and affirm at once that the aim of the humanities is to create and understand man at his best.

Interpreted in this way, the humanities do not depend upon the

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spirit of inquiry as do the social and natural sciences. This is the spirit that has dominated the intellectual world since the Renaissance, fed from the springs of curiosity in the human psyche and the need for guiding principles of action. When this spirit is in the ascendant, man's first question is, "What is there?" and his last question is, "What is there in it for me?" But the humanities cannot live at the level of curiosity and practice. Their interrogations probe the deeper passages of anxious and perplexed man, not to inventory his skills, but to affirm his character. Here man's first question is, "Who is there?" and his last is, "Am I there too?"

The answers to these questions are sought in philosophy, literature, history, language and the arts, and in some of the sciences. That is why the humanists must constantly protest the increasing vocationalization of college curricula and why they are distressed by any attempt to eliminate language requirements. For somehow these seem to be ways of lowering standards—not merely standards of academic achievement, but the standards necessary to make man realize his deepest potentialities. The humanities are not medicine for a sick race, nor amusement for a bored people, nor vehicles to prestige for the intellectually ambitious, nor exercises designed to mold a character out of the morally shapeless. The humanities are the mirrors of genius in which we may see ourselves.

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Portrait

Alvin Johnson

IRVING DILLIARD

It was a sultry, storm-threatening midsummer day in the virgin country of northeastern Nebraska, just west of the Missouri River. Pioneer farmer John Johnson and his sturdy son Alvin were working hard in the father's wheat field to get the shocks into the stack before the skies let loose. The nearest settlement was Homer, a tiny trading post on the road from Sioux City down to Omaha. Before Lewis and Clark pushed their boats up the river three-quarters of a century earlier, Homer had been the site of the "Large Village" of the Omahas. Due east, an easy walk for the Indians, was Land's End, with its sharp drop of five hundred feet from the top of the bluff to the brown Missouri. There the Indians had prayed to the Great Spirit for a bountiful harvest. There, so the legend ran, they had held their annual sacrificial dance. After a day of feasting, six of the strongest braves began an endurance dance at sunset that lasted, the story went, until one fell from exhaustion into the river far below.

But the boy in the wheat field, imaginative though he was, could have had little thought for Indian rites that day. The heavens looked down menacingly on Dakota County as the two harvesters strained every nerve in themselves and urged on the span of beautiful horses, just in their prime. The father, an emigrant from Denmark, heavily bearded in dark brown up to the cheekbones, calculated that a succession of rains, with the wheat still in shocks in the field, might bring ruin to his crop. The native-born son knew as his own birthplace the broken river valley ground, with its stand of oak timber and its clear stream fed by springs. He was equally aware of the emergency.

The man and the boy had no time for the usual recess at noon. They tied the team, still hitched to the hayrack, to the corner post of a shed. They put a box of oats before each horse and then rushed into the farmhouse for their own hurried midday meal. But they were hardly at the table when a terrific commotion arose near the barn lot. From the door they could see the horses galloping away into the field with the hayrack careening behind them. It was clear what had happened. The horses, annoyed by flies, had stomped and beaten around until they had pulled down the corner post of the shed; this dropped the roof onto their heads and necks and set them into a frenzy.

The boy ran as fast as he could after the charging team, because he could see the horses were heading for a forty-foot precipice which edged one side of the field. But there was no stopping the frightened animals. Over the brink they dashed, the wagon after them. When the father caught up with his son at the precipice, he looked down on two dead horses and a smashed wagon and hayrack. The boy waited for his elder to speak. He knew his father's calmness in handling the blows of fate, but the son thought his father would at least groan

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IRVING DILLIARD is editor of the editorial page of the *St. Louis Post-Dispatch*. This sketch of the life and works of Alvin Johnson was written by Mr. Dilliard on the occasion of the subject's eightieth birthday.

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at the loss of horses that had been his love and pride. Yet there was no groan, no word of complaint.

"Alvin," the father said, "run over to the pasture and bring in the colt and the old mare. I'll fix up the old wagon and we'll go ahead with the stacking."

The colt was not much more than broken. For several years the old mare had been a pensioner. The farmer and his son gathered up odds and ends of harness, fitted the pieces on the colt and old mare and hitched them to the wagon that had been discarded. They went back to the field and hauled shocks to the stack until nearly dark. Then the father finished off the stack with wheat bundles so skillfully fitted together that the sloping top would have defied the worst of rains.

That night a deluge came. It poured torrents again the next day. Between rains the farmer and his son removed the harness from the dead horses, pulled the broken wagon away from the bodies and spaded down earth from the precipice to bury the horses deep. They could not let the coyotes tear the carcasses of the horses they had so much admired.

Finally the burying was done and the sad episode at an end. The father leaned on his spade and reflected. Then he said:

"Things will often go wrong with you, Alvin. It can't hurt you, if you don't lose your courage."

Alvin Johnson learned more on that Nebraska farm in the 1880's than that the hard blows of fate cannot hurt if you do not lose your courage. He learned his faith in democracy at the grass roots and he learned it early. From a reserve of gold coins, kept according to Danish custom, his father advanced two hundred dollars to the county commissioners to pay an Englishman for the reopening of a road through the Englishman's property. When he had bought the farm, the unfriendly Englishman had found that the road had not been recorded. He cut a ditch across the road and put up a barbed-wire barricade. Some thirty settlers above the Johnson farm had been using the road and were dependent on it for access to the market for their grain and hogs. The county commissioners were willing to condemn the land for the road and thus to open it again, but the county did not have the two hundred dollars to pay for the right of way. The commissioners asked the settlers to lend the county the money until the next summer. But all the settlers together had no such total in ready cash. They turned to John Johnson because they knew that he continued to live by ancient peasant traditions from overseas. They knew that these traditions called for long-term supplies of bread grain, corn for stock, hay for winter feeding—and his two stacks of eagles and double eagles for financial extremities.

The bearded Dane delivered the two hundred dollars in gold to the county commissioners. The Englishman was paid and the road was reopened. When summer came, John Johnson went to the courthouse for the return of his money as promised. He was told that the commissioners had exceeded their lawful powers in accepting the money from an individual and that they now could not legally pay him back. The counsel for the commissioners made a proposition that would have fleeced him of much of the debt owed to him. It was what might have been expected from a courthouse which the farmers regarded as a nest of scoundrels.

John Johnson had a practical answer. He got himself chosen in a precinct caucus as a delegate to the convention at which the particularly offending commissioner was to stand for renomination. Then with friends who were chosen as other delegates, the determined farmer had voting power enough to decide whether the commissioner would be renominated.

The day after the caucus, an emissary of the tricky commissioner drove up in a buggy and smilingly announced that the commissioner had found a way for the county to repay the money—in about three weeks. John Johnson quickly figured that would be a week after the convention at which the commissioner was seeking renomination. The farmer said he would not trust the commissioner's word, since it had

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been untrustworthy before. So the emissary volunteered to go back and get the pledge written and signed in the commissioner's hand. When he arrived with the letter of promise the next day, the farmer read it and then quickly put the letter in his pocket. The emissary was aghast. He was to have given the letter up only if John Johnson agreed to support the commissioner in the convention. The farmer, as he promptly observed, was to be bribed with his own money. John Johnson said he would not return the letter, that he would show it to the convention and drive "that scoundrel out of office." The commissioner himself called and begged for the letter, but it was not returned. It was already in circulation, and the purpose was to defeat the commissioner if he did not withdraw. When the convention met, the scheming commissioner was roundly beaten. His political career, he remarked bitterly, had been ruined by "that Dane."

But Alvin Johnson learned still more in his boyhood's Middle America than courage in the face of adversity and the strength of the individual citizen who chooses to apply himself to the problems of democracy nearest to his hand. He learned that there is prejudice that must be faced, combatted and overcome. For when he was four, his sisters took him to visit the rural school. A kind-hearted girl of ten named Hattie led him about by the hand. Then a big girl named Bertha came up. "Hattie!" she said sharply. "Take your hand away from that nasty little Dane. He isn't fit to touch your hand." Up to then, little Alvin had not even known that he was a Dane or that Danes were not liked by some people.

The boy learned from parents who were natural-born educators, particularly his mother, who read Herbert Spencer and believed in votes for women; from a neighboring uncle, George Bille, who possessed unquenchable intellectual interests and books like Darwin's *Origin of Species*, Grote's *History of Greece* and Green's *Short History*; from the old-fashioned farmstead, where an inquisitive child found out the ways of plants and animals and the influence of weather on life and how geology recorded time on the faces of eroded valleys. But nothing else he learned was to guide so much his course over three-quarters of a century as the meanness and injustice of prejudice against people because of racial or nationalistic backgrounds.

This was not just because Alvin Johnson was that "nasty little Dane." His father, when he was still Jens Jensen Deyrup, back in Denmark, was befriended by a Jewish peddler at a critical moment. The personal attachment that resulted was so deep that the young man became a stanch defender of Jews on all occasions. In contrast to those non-Jewish parents who consciously or otherwise teach anti-Semitism, John Johnson deliberately taught pro-Semitism to his children. Admiration for Jewish people came to be as much a part of Alvin Johnson as the Missouri Valley soil on which he drove a team by the time he was ten.

The father's admiration for the Jewish way of life led him to declare his son a man at the age of thirteen and to grant him his independence from paternal control. By formal agreement the youth took over the farm for the next five years, with the expectation that his one-third share of the income would build up the funds required to see him through college. The father would volunteer no advice about running the farm, but he would give suggestions if asked.

Drought that seared crops and cholera that killed hogs knocked the plan awry, but left the young farmer enough capital to start at the University of Nebraska when he was eighteen. He intended to prepare himself for medicine. But his interests changed, and after two years he began to center on the classics and philology. With Willa Cather for a classmate, he learned Latin and Greek almost as modern languages. Tacitus and Thucydides and Horace became his friends of the long, cold winter evenings, friends who still would be riding with him on Manhattan subways a half-century later.

Graduation came in 1897, and with it an appointment as a teaching fellow in Greek. The next year he struggled with a class in

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Homer and then one in Xenophon, meanwhile completing the work for a master's degree. Then the Spanish-American War broke out. The young teacher set aside his hatred of war, learned from his father and confirmed by books, and enlisted to take his part in his country's hazards and to share the experience of soldiering. At Chickamauga, Georgia, where he trained for four months, he saw the young men from the Nebraska plains sick or dying of malaria, dysentery and typhoid. He and only two others survived in his tent of six. Horrified by the waste in life and time and substance, he thought anew about war and asked himself whether this might be the opening skirmish in a world-wide conflict that would destroy Europe's reactionary empires and complete the liberations begun by the American and French revolutions. The one definite answer was that philology was no longer the field for Alvin Johnson. As soon as he was discharged, he set out for New York and Columbia University to study political economy. And he planned to have a first-hand look at Wall Street, the center of so many of the farmers' troubles.

For a great faculty of social scientists that included Burgess, Boas, and Seligman, Dunning, Goodnow, John Bates Clark and John Bassett Moore, the young Nebraskan produced a doctoral thesis on rent in modern economic theory. He had already begun to teach economics at Bryn Mawr by 1901, and with it started a peripatetic academic career that saw him on the faculties of seven universities in barely more than twice as many years. After Bryn Mawr there came other teaching posts in rapid succession: Columbia, where he married Edith Henry in 1904; Nebraska, his alma mater; Texas, where a young history instructor named Walton Hamilton was "the best student" he ever had; Chicago, scene of a feud with the Columbia economists; Stanford, which was delightful but too far from the current centers of progressive strength in politics; Cornell, where he went through the campaign of 1912, enjoyed students such as Hu Shih, followed the urge to write a novel of university life, *The Professor and the Petticoat*, and indulged a steadily growing interest in periodical literature about public affairs; then Stanford again for two of the war years.

This Veblen-like nomadic career was not without purpose. There were advances in rank and salary, to be sure, but these were not motivating. Alvin Johnson had the broad outlook of the prairies that makes the entire country a man's bailiwick. He wanted to know the whole of his land, and the one best way to do it was to live and work for a while in every part of it—North, South, East and West. His family grew until there were seven children. Yet there was never any problem of taking them out of school in one place and settling them down again in another. Their mother was a natural teacher as well as a person of amazingly wide knowledge. She took each in turn through kindergarten, the elementary grades and a full high-school course. Not until the sons and daughters of Alvin and Edith Johnson entered college did they meet the formal education of the school system.

All the while, the migratory teacher was writing and editing. At Columbia he worked on *The New International Encyclopaedia*. He wrote for *The Political Science Quarterly*, *The Quarterly Journal of Economics* and *The Atlantic Monthly*. When the *New Republic* appeared as a journalistic accompaniment of the progressive movement in politics, he contributed to almost every issue in the first year. Then in 1917, the teacher turned publicist and joined the staff with Herbert Croly, Walter Lippmann and Francis Hackett. Association with them and their friends from both sides of the Atlantic was exciting. At home the new forces in politics were getting things done with Wilson, La Follette, Pinchot, Brandeis, Borah, Norris and Hiram Johnson. Abroad was the war that soon would reach to the wheat fields of Nebraska and claim other farmers' sons. A thousand questions had to be debated in staff meetings and appraised in editorials and articles for the stream of weekly issues.

There were new forces in teaching, too. John Dewey, Charles A. Beard and James

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Harvey Robinson had decided it was time to liberate education from the old academic restrictions, and Alvin Johnson was among the first to join them. With stout help, they founded the New School for Social Research in New York in 1919. At first, the *New Republic* editor was little more than a trustee of the venture. As financial and administrative troubles piled up in the first two years, he became increasingly interested. When liquidation seemed inevitable in 1922, he took over to direct it for the next quarter-century. Nothing could have been better suited to his talents. He believed with intense conviction in the necessity for adult education. He knew that in educating men and women beyond college years, the great United States trailed far behind the little Denmark of his parents. He saw the New School as "not confining itself to problems of the present, however urgent, or the problems of the future, however imperative, but aiming at something deeper, the discovery of the forces operating to rebuild civilization, to strengthen faith in the power of intelligence and enlightened will—to recreate a world." He relished the challenge of applying the idea where it would meet with doubt and resistance, but also with enthusiastic support. In the face of discouragement and difficulty he was indefatigable. Again and again he remembered his father's calm counsel after the tragedy of the runaway horses.

Free minds liberate other minds. The early staff of teachers, in addition to the founders, included Thorstein Veblen, Wesley C. Mitchell, Horace M. Kallen, Roscoe Pound, Graham Wallas, Harold J. Laski, Eduard C. Lindeman, Franz Boas, John B. Watson, Morris R. Cohen, W. I. Thomas, Julian Huxley and Stark Young. First quarters at London Terrace on West Twenty-third Street were soon outgrown, and from the depression years arose the modernistic building at 66 West Twelfth Street, now in turn outgrown. In a recent year, some 5,000 students with an average age of 33, but ranging from 20 to 79, attended more than 300 courses taught by 219 instructors. Four out of five studied only for the sake of knowledge, but degrees, including the doctorate, could be had by those who qualified. A third were engineers, lawyers, doctors, architects and other professional people. Eight hundred were clerical and sales workers, and some were business executives. Housewives numbered 500 and teachers 250. Not everybody might learn Greek at 80 as Cato did, but those who wanted to go on learning year after year were legion. When the twenty-fifth anniversary was celebrated in 1944, the congratulatory messages from over the world included a letter from the White House, signed: Franklin D. Roosevelt.

Has anyone ever met more fully the need of the hour in his field than Alvin Johnson did in his when he created the New School's Graduate Faculty—its "University in Exile" —to provide a refuge for scholars driven out of Europe by the twin tyrannies of nazism and fascism? The question is a fair one. For the Johnson idea was a great idea greatly carried out. As Hitler made life intolerable for Germany's best social scientists, Alvin Johnson brought such men as Emil Lederer, Arnold Brecht and Hans Simons to America. Beginning with a dozen refugees in 1933, the faculty grew to a score and more, mostly Germans, but including Austrians, Russians, a Spaniard and an Italian. When Hitler's armies overran France and Belgium, French-speaking exiles were brought to the New School to form the École Libre des Hautes Études. Jacques Maritain was its chief. On its staff were scholars of the quality of Paul Van Zeeland, Gustave Cohen and Henri Gregoire. Innumerable problems had to be solved. Patience and diplomacy were required, but also ability to act quickly when every hour counted in saving a scholar from imprisonment. Alvin Johnson handled so many visas and so often served other educational institutions which desired to help an individual scholar that he became virtually a functionary of the State Department. When the history of higher education in the first half of the twentieth century is written, the story of the New School's Graduate Faculty will be one of its brightest achievements.

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The true worth of many of these exiled scholars Alvin Johnson already knew from his experience as the associate editor of the *Encyclopaedia of the Social Sciences* who handled their contributions to that monumental stock-taking of social knowledge of the 1930's. Edwin R. A. Seligman was nominally editor-in-chief, but his illness threw the editorship on the director of the New School, who selected most of the contributors, read, edited, translated and rewrote articles and generally carried through the project that John Dewey likened to the work of Diderot and the Encyclopedists. The task, performed in the name of ten constituent scholarly societies, was to gather the best thought in the social sciences over the world. Max Lerner, himself one of the brilliant company, recalls that the working editor had a big bear-like capacity for taking a litter of cubs and licking them into shape as an editorial staff. The unique Johnson contribution was "to know enough about everything and not too much about any one thing to get stuck beyond extrication." Surely the *Encyclopaedia of the Social Sciences* was and still is the United States' most distinguished contribution to international scholarship. Yet Alvin Johnson would take greater satisfaction in knowing that a second world-wide inventory of social learning and practice were now in progress than in his own pioneering work on the first.

This emphasis on administration of the New School and the editorship of the *Encyclopaedia of the Social Sciences* obscures a solid economist's contribution to his own field of inquiry. For when the American Economic Association chose him as its president for 1936, it acknowledged not his skill at managing a faculty or a staff, but as a creative worker in economic science. His presidential address was surprisingly brief, barely more than three pages, but the brevity only underscored the importance of his message and the clarity with which it was phrased. The economist cannot be justly criticized, he said, as aloof from issues of his time. Where the economist may be fairly held to account is in the slowness of his response, which allows too long a lag between the questions put to him and the answers he works out. When the world is undergoing transition, delayed answers may come too late to be of value. The trouble is that the economist has refused to pass judgment because he still lacks 10 per cent of the data which he regards as necessary. Yet the practical affairs of the world must be conducted on much less adequate data than 90 per cent. Overlooking the fact that his data must always be less than perfect, the economist guides too much by academic perfectionism and less by the demands of the world in which he lives. The result is that politics acts in crises for the most part without the benefit of the economist's valuable services.

To recognize Alvin Johnson the economist, Adolph Lowe and a group of other beneficiaries of his later achievements are publishing for his eightieth birthday, December 18, a collection of his studies in economic analysis and economic sociology and history, including papers on technological unemployment and monopoly. Among them are his strong, balanced defense of capitalism as an economic system and a tribute to the common man for age-old wisdom and self-discipline. This harvest of his scholarly writings presents, in his own words, the "faith of a skeptic."

One of his more notable public services anticipated by a decade the United States Supreme Court's historic blow against racial discrimination. By appointment of Governor Thomas E. Dewey in 1943, he became vice-chairman—second only to Irving M. Ives, then Assembly majority leader at Albany—of the New York commission which conducted hearings all over New York State on the problem of discrimination in employment. The same commission—with Alvin Johnson doing much of the work—then drafted a statute that barred discrimination on account of race, color, creed or national origin. This was a monumental attack on racial prejudice, and millions are becoming its beneficiaries.

It is almost impossible for Alvin Johnson to speak without sparking ideas. When friends held a reception in his honor five

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years ago in Washington, he told them that the national capital should and could become an "intellectual capital" as well as a political one. The multiplicity of organizations of independent groups of educated people in Washington kept them from making the total impression that was rightfully theirs to make. He proposed a new New School, this one in Washington, for which he predicted 20,000 students in 10 years, half of them from the immediate area and half from all over the United States.

For years he has written model editorials in the New School's weekly bulletin. If teachers of journalism want their students to know informed editorial writing at its provocative best, they will include on every journalism library reading list Alvin Johnson's two collections of his clear, concise commentaries: *Deliver Us from Dogma* (1934) and *The Clock of History* (1946). Long before it became the fashion in Washington to say so, Alvin Johnson was writing that under the threat of the atomic bomb we can never afford war again, since peoples on both sides could be destroyed almost entirely by vaporization. He warned that no amount of investment or security system could keep the bomb a monopoly of the nations that are just and humane. He has written that the United States will never fight Russia on account of Soviet ideologies, indeed that no country has ever gone to war over ideology. He sees the Negro problem as 100 per cent American, and fascist methods for dealing with it as part of the American practice. And he observes the international fascists fishing in our troubled waters, hoping to make something much more extensive out of racial discrimination in the United States, to the subversion of our democratic institutions. The economist in him points out that economic discrimination, not social, is the great vice in our race relations. As to the working of our politics, admittedly too often the lesser man is elected and the wrong policy is chosen. But, remembering his father's grass-roots application of the democratic process in Dakota County, Nebraska, Alvin Johnson rejects the notion that the American people are fickle, prone to swift and ill-considered action, contemptuous of values they do not understand. He reads history and finds we are not so uninformed politically as only a generation ago. He notes that political literature has improved and that the best of our political leaders on both sides deal with the issues. And because democracy is cordial to special ability and appreciative of achievement, our task is to find ways of improving democracy's lights—and that task is especially the mission of adult education.

The man who has added these cameo editorials to scholarly writings in economics knows his way in other forms of literature. His novel *Spring Storm* (1936) is both a nostalgic love story and social history of the rural Nebraska of his youth. In *Pioneer's Progress* (1952), he has put on the shelf of American autobiography a book to stand with Jane Addams' *Twenty Years at Hull House*. And Clara W. Mayer, who has worked with him from earliest days at the New School, ventures the opinion that a book of his letters on a myriad of themes would rank among the finest collections of correspondence. But whatever the form, Alvin Johnson seldom rewrites. His thinking is done before he starts, the corrections already made.

The sturdy Nebraskan farm boy grew to be a large man with features hewn out of the bluffs of his Missouri Valley. He has been described as gruff and kindly, as wise and shrewd, as pugnacious and undogmatic, as modest and relentless, as an astute politician, as a warm friend of young people. He has always wanted to know all the handicaps, but he has no use for a counsel of despair. Once when the odds were heavily against success, he told his co-workers: "Anyone can spin a rope of hemp; we've got to make ours of sand." Again: "Quality breeds quality; if we keep the standard high we'll make the grade." And to quote once more: "The physicists have discovered the possibility of penetrating the black fog of London with infra-red rays. Reason is, after all, a kind of infra-red ray." By epigram and

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by example he has imbued others, as John Dewey said, with the ardor that possesses him.

No description of Alvin Johnson would be remotely complete that did not tell how he revises his opinions in the light of new information, how he admits error when he has come to believe himself wrong. A fresh example is striking. On October 27, 1952, he led a group of some twenty-five distinguished residents of the New York area in announcing support for General Dwight D. Eisenhower for President. He said he was placing the country's welfare above party loyalty. Expecting that General Eisenhower as President could engage in successful tactical maneuvers in political affairs, as he had engaged in military maneuvers, Alvin Johnson said that he and his co-signers believed that General Eisenhower through "wise and resolute leadership could secure unity among the people of the United States and of the free world." And so an outstanding Democrat urged the election of Republican Eisenhower in a statement widely printed by the press in the fall of 1952. Eighteen months later, after watching the Eisenhower Administration in operation, he had changed his mind. He confessed in a new letter that in 1952 he had bombarded the editors with arguments for General Eisenhower even before many newspapers had decided whom to support. He had done it with a yearning for "an era of good feeling under General Ike who would stand for all the people." But his hopes were defeated. Eisenhower might "still like to be President of all the people but he was the victim of fatal advice."

The President's attitude toward TVA reflected this bad counsel. For TVA was and is an inspiring demonstration of American creativeness, as nonpolitical as the Constitution, administered first by David E. Lilienthal on a nonpartisan basis and then by Gordon R. Clapp in the same nonpolitical way. Yet Gordon Clapp was not reappointed at the end of a nine-year term as a career administrator. That was sign enough for Alvin Johnson. With regret he left the ranks of the Eisenhower Democrats then and there. In this failure to keep public servant Gordon Clapp in a post he had adorned, Alvin Johnson found evidence of the Eisenhower Administration's incapacity to govern. So he wrote to the press, May 20, 1954. By October 3, he was convinced that only the election of a Democratic Congress could save President Eisenhower from the McCarthys, Knowlands and other irresponsibles in his own party. Convinced himself, "A. J." wrote it out in print for all to read.

Mere mention of his name hangs a gallery of pictures for those who know him—Alvin Johnson talking with firebrand Mother Jones in Texas in a time of labor trouble in the West; making the rounds of Carnegie libraries to see what odd things communities had done with their library grants; trimming trees and sawing up firewood on his sweep of ground along the Hudson at Nyack; receiving the award of Officer of the Legion of Honor from France; enjoying a strawberry sociable on a Southern Illinois church lawn; presenting the case for the wise use of human talents after a retirement age of sixty-five; working with Joseph Urban on the plans for the Twelfth Street building of the New School; sacrificing his time for pursuit of his own field of scholarship to the greater cause of saving other scholars; living life to the full with family and colleagues, untrammeled by dogma, knowing no fear where ideas are free and exchange is in good faith, confident that after the spring storm comes growth and with growth maturity and harvest in summer's golden sun.

John Johnson's farmer boy from the heartland long since became a world citizen with fellow Americans like Oliver Wendell Holmes, Jr., Louis D. Brandeis, John Dewey, Eleanor Roosevelt, Carl Sandburg, Learned Hand, Archibald MacLeish. But his work has changed hardly at all. He is still gathering wheat shocks from threatened fields. He is still building storm-proof stacks of grain—only now all his grain is seed grain.

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The Scholar's Scratch Pad

JACQUES BARZUN

Anyone who, like myself, lives within walking distance of a seat of learning—which means about 98 per cent of the population of the United States—is familiar with the wintry sight of the athlete limbering up on the wooden track. There he stands, a forked radish in a gray union suit, the semblance of a man who has just escaped half clad from a fire. He seems to be leaping about in anguish, or perhaps to keep warm. Arms outspread, he touches the ground to the left and then to the right of his flexible torso. Is he picking up his minor belongings scattered on the brown grass, and is it an expression of joy when he starts again to move his legs up and down on one spot, at the risk of knocking his teeth out with his knees?

No, as I come nearer and make out his features, I discover that he must be engaged in some intellectual exercise, for there is a slight frown on his face. Indeed, the nervous instability of his whole being suggests a conscious repetition of the Darwinian struggle for survival. He sketches motions of throwing with his arms; or, bending from the waist, he gives sudden starts as if he heard the whizz of flint heads to the rear. He runs a few desperate steps, then stops, proving that he is merely reliving in thought the ascent of man. The gray cotton training suit is no primitive garment and this rehearsing of feats for muscular preparedness is obviously a work of highly civilized imagination. If any doubt should linger, there is the Georgian gymnasium in plain sight and the chapel bell is tolling.

You and I have now reached the classrooms and laboratories, and the thought occurs to us: Are they doing as well in there with their invisible muscles of mind as our galloping galoot outside? There is between the two a great discrepancy. To begin with, his is a recognized form of training and self-discipline. Every beholder of his antics is ready with an explanation of them, and it takes an effort of the will to consider them in any way singular or ludicrous. Then again he is envied, in a manly spirit, for the way he spends his time. In the opinion of the community he holds a place of prestige and power, and to the school he is without question an indispensable man—one of eleven or nine or some other number cherished by philosophers. If he sprains his wrist or sneezes significantly, thousands grow despondent. Lastly, it is universally agreed that by his apparently meaningless gestures he is doing himself a great good: he is keeping fit.

"Fit for what?" is not a proper question. Fit to be a man, fit for his own enjoyment, fit to be hugged by the girls, fit. But the other question persists as to whether the others, indoors, mere potential men in contrast with him, half men at best, are developing their strength of mind in a comparable degree with a comparable seriousness. Is there a slight frown on *their* faces, or only a blank bored look?

Certainly the outside world wants them to be "competent, useful members of society," and if that entails—for no reason that one can give—a knowledge of algebra and at least four plays of Shakespeare, why, the world bows to blind Necessity. But the world does not cheer the strugglers for this kind of life: it demands that survival shall be easily within the reach of all; and it would jeer at any eccentric who should publicly flex his mental muscles and hope for applause.

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II

All this is nothing new. The unpalatable truth came out at the trial of Socrates; and when Petrarch, almost two thousand years later, was urging the city fathers of Florence to establish a chair of Greek, he took care to tell them it would be good for business. Paradox or not, it is always and everywhere true that man at large claims superiority over the rest of creation by virtue of his sublime intellect, but as an individual the first and chiefest thing he cares about is to have his fellow-man feel his biceps.

The anomaly is not so irrational as might be supposed. The simple truth is that the analogy between physical and mental strength is imperfect. As Shaw says somewhere, the fact that one man has knocked down another who is unable to get up before the count of ten is evident to all beholders; whereas the excellence of *King Lear* will forever be subject to dispute. We are bodies first and the physical eye is our trustiest witness. For the great majority, it is the sole witness—to truth, to merit, to the desirable goal of life.

The mind's eye, contrariwise, develops irregularly, by accident—or so it seems. Only those in whom it is sharp by nature can discern its function or its worth in others; nor is it ever quite certain among its possessors what it is they see, much less how they can teach one another to see rightly. The one notable success in unifying men's ideas, the success of science, has come from reducing, once again, the invisibly conceived to the physically perceived. Admirable, but it still leaves the old, vast, treacherous territory of indispensable knowledge to be conquered anew by each mind. On the margins of science itself, the confused fight in the fog goes on among the sharpest seers we have—witness Einstein and Niels Bohr when they come to discuss Space, Time, Energy—or the good life of a master plumber.

III

Master plumber indeed! We still have to do our own plumbing, to the extent that we see depths to plumb. We mustn't fool ourselves. Because the newspapers speak of the digital computer as a "brain," and pretend that it is busy learning to translate Russian, we mustn't think that one of these days we shall hear it lisp the secret of the universe—or even tell us when we should carry our umbrella.

To be sure, there is as yet no literal belief in these possibilities and it may seem as if the danger of handing over our destiny to a tangle of copper wires were an alarmist's exaggeration. The great I AM is not ready to slip a notch into the great I BM. But the indirect danger is not remote. The talk about "brains" existing outside man strengthens the rooted faith in mechanical operation; it fosters the natural, inescapable prejudice which says that only the physical is real. Perhaps we cannot help speaking of another man's brain when we mean his mind—though an earlier age would have pointed out that all men have brains, including idiots, whereas minds can be absent or vacant or vestigial. But we might do well to remember that first and last it is the mind that feeds the brain: the electronic computer clicks out its miraculous results because it has been fed the facts, has received the push and been created by certain minds. And it makes no mistakes because it isn't busy thinking.

Similarly, it is the mind and nothing but the mind that feeds the infant brain, from the first words of the miscalled "native" tongue to the rudimentary ethics of "No touch!" So far we see the desirability of "putting our minds" on the task, and we do pretty well. But later on we give up, or grow foolishly embarrassed. We turn out the young mind to scrubby pastures and expect it to feed itself. We seldom notice when it "grows pale and thin and dies," and we never by any chance require of it hygiene and callisthenics. We have been told that there is no such thing as mind at large, only aptitudes, and this dogma we accept. Or if we do believe in general intelligence, we take it as a self-perpetuating characteristic, like brown eyes, which needs no fur-

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bishing. We vigorously rub the scalp against prematurely falling hair, but a hard rub of the mind is rude and probably indecent. We are left to our own devices, which means a relishing of defeatism that is akin to complacency.

IV

Yet giving "so little for the mind"—to quote the wonderful title of a book I haven't read—and encouraging but few minds to take pride in keeping fit, we should not be surprised that we have a "problem of communication." Ten thousand years after the invention of speech, writing and the alphabet, we cannot say "Boo" to a goose and be sure of being understood. Write it down and you become "controversial." Pictures might help—the alphabet obviously was not a sound idea. As for explaining by word of mouth, it clearly makes you a disturber of the peace —the peace of mind naturally craved by those who have never learned to listen.

I remember those dispiriting forty-five minutes on the boat from the mainland to Martha's Vineyard last summer. The day was mild and fair and I was among the first on board, hoping precisely for quiet. But my corner was soon invaded, at first by an elderly couple who were pleasant enough until they began to converse.

"I think it's going to clear some more," said she.

"Hunh?"

She repeated it. A pause, then he spoke up:

"The wind's going to shift and maybe we'll get the smoke blowing this way."

"Whunh?"

He had to repeat. Neither was deaf, but during the entire trip it was "Hunh, whunh, hunh, whunh" every ten seconds, as from a repellent species of ducks.

And they were not alone: mothers came and did not listen to their children, who reciprocated a hundredfold. Foursomes of young people stood about taking color movies by simply pressing a button, but experienced the greatest difficulty in conveying their wishes to one another. Every idea was gone over, shredded up and regurgitated. The steamship company should have provided a translator, a go-between. But where could it find one? When we were about to dock, a passenger standing close to the purser asked in clear tones whether we stopped any length of time at Vineyard Haven or sailed right on. The young official said: "Hunh?" He too was a duck.

And I began to long for the life of the solitary athlete galvanized into action by *imaginary* noises.

The Scholar's Scratch Pad *is to be a regular department in* THE AMERICAN SCHOLAR. *In each number, a member of the Editorial Board will set down his musings, casual or urgent, on a subject or subjects of his own choosing. This "editorial corner" will "belong," in each number, to the editor who occupies it. Responsibility and praise or abuse are his alone. Mr. Barzun's comments constitute the first such contribution; Louis Kronenberger will write on* The Scholar's Scratch Pad *for the Spring number.*

—EDITOR

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..... The Revolving Bookstand .....

Dignity and Passivity

REALITIES OF AMERICAN FOREIGN POLICY. By George F. Kennan. *Princeton: Princeton University Press. 120 pp. $2.75.*

Reviewed by ASHER LANS

It is entirely appropriate that this book should open with a sketchy historical introduction to American foreign policy. For one of George Kennan's basic themes is that the diplomacy of the United States, after having been conspicuously successful between 1789 and 1898, has throughout most of the twentieth century deteriorated into well-intended, but impractical and therefore dangerous utopianism.

A rationally conducted foreign policy has as its aim, Kennan contends, the perpetuation of the domestic program of the ruling group in any society. The laissez-faire concept dominated American politics during the nineteenth century. The diplomatic corollary of laissez faire was the Monroe Doctrine: the insulation of "the physical intactness of our national life from any external military or political intrusion." In carrying out this policy, American statesmen of earlier generations "dealt very frankly and confidently with power realities." They did not seek to reconstruct the world in the image of the United States; they merely sought to maintain a "favorable . . . foreign environment."

With the beginning of the twentieth century, Kennan alleges, our statesmen devoted themselves increasingly to the cultivation of the "American dream" of peace by "contractual arrangement," such as arbitration and disarmament treaties and eventually the United Nations and other multilateral organizations. Our political leaders cherished the illusion that the "dark cloud of violence and aggression . . . was the product of the ill will of a few individuals and would disappear" when the malfeasors were banished from the scene. Hence the people of the United States have been bemused into accepting a devil theory of war and peace.

Mr. Kennan further postulates that any attempt to conduct a foreign policy upon ethical standards is foredoomed to failure. "Let us not assume that the purposes of states . . . are fit subjects for measurement in moral terms." The origin of every nation lies in acts of violence. Our diplomacy should not be "predicated on any hope for the early total abolition of violence from the affairs of nations, but concerned primarily to reduce the scope and dangerousness of such violence where it cannot be avoided."

In seeking to achieve this limited objective, we should resort to the "traditional devices of political expediency." Free trade in goods and ideas should supplant economic aid. "The power to take decision" must not be divorced from the "power to implement decision"; important political determinations must be made by the great states and not by vote of a United Nations majority "composed mainly of smaller and weaker countries." We should not attempt to guide the internal governance of the peoples of the "unsettled areas," but we must protect our investment in raw-material production.

Once again, as in his earlier book, *American Diplomacy*, Mr. Kennan attributes many of our difficulties to the statesmen who, allegedly influenced by the "delusion" of total surrender, wrote the "Carthaginian" peaces of 1919 and 1945.

The coalition of powers that overcame Napoleon after twenty years of war had as much reason to hate the French as the victorious states of 1945 had to fear Germany and Japan. However, by the extreme moderation displayed at the Congress of Vienna, France was reassimilated into the community of Europe and was not driven into restless xenophobia. We are presumably

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supposed to infer that international tension would be much less if the Hohenzollerns had been left on the German throne after the First World War or if the Second World War had been terminated by a truce negotiated with some strong, de-Nazified leader of the Third Reich.

The unconditional surrender issue illustrates the limitations of Mr. Kennan's naturalistic approach. The appeal to history seems to me to prove nothing at all. The terms of peace in 1919 may have been misguided, but the "villains" were not the American idealists but the European realists. For the reparations claims and military occupations which followed World War I were not instigated by the "dreamer" Wilson but by the "sophisticated" Clemenceau and Lloyd George. In the past, Mr. Kennan has called on Americans to approach the "irritating and unpleasant" events which occur "outside our borders" with the same "detachment" with which a physician contemplates disease. The conquest of Manchuria, the invasion of Ethiopia, the Anschluss with Austria, the dismemberment of Czechoslovakia were all accepted by detached statesmen as concessions to "realities," unfortunate but pragmatically necessary.

The moderation which characterized the diplomacy of the nineteenth century was not the product of superior wisdom, but a reflection of the moderation the great European nations displayed toward one another and of their ability to externalize their major aggressions into Asia and Africa. In addition, there were no basic ideological issues dividing the ruling elite of the various European states, and, after Napoleon, there was no state aiming at domination of the Continent. Indeed, if historical analogies are of value in the formulation of contemporary American foreign policy, our major attention should be given to the religious conflicts and overweening national ambitions that engulfed the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. The present is not the first era whose disputes could not be resolved by "political expediency" or by "realistic" give-and-take.

"Realism" impels Mr. Kennan to suggest that our foreign policy has erred in an attempt to accomplish too much. For example, the industrialization of underdeveloped countries (including presumably Point IV and similar programs) is an achievement not "worth the price." For such change undermines the "authority of the past"; and "wherever, above all, the experience of the father becomes irrelevant to the trials and searchings of the son —there the foundations of man's inner health and stability begin to crumble, insecurity and panic begin to take over, conduct becomes erratic and aggressive."

While the literary style may be different, this is precisely the theme of the "old China hands." Mr. Kennan finds that the sources of Soviet strength in Asia lie in "the general social unrest" and "in the receptiveness of millions of people to ideological clichés. . . ." The chief policy recommendation is that "as things stand today," we should principally display "toward the people of these unsettled areas an American personality marked by a very special reserve and dignity." In any case, Mr. Kennan does not seem to feel that our relations with Asia are of great moment. For, we are told, China's limited resources preclude attainment of any important military or economic status, and the problem of aggression is, after all, 80 per cent in Indo-China. In the present author's hands, "realism" is not very far removed from the preachment of inactivity.

Much of Mr. Kennan's reputation is based upon his analyses in past writings of the sources of Soviet conduct. *Realities of American Foreign Policy* commences its discussion of communism with an incisive survey of the Soviet Union's geopolitical position. On the level of policy, this book is uninformative and devoid of suggestions. It is contended that, apart from war, the area of Communist control can be reduced only as a result of compulsions (which remain unspecified) arising "within the structure of Soviet power itself." We are told that the warmth of our national life and leadership, "if these were what they should be," will by gentle indirection overcome the Iron Curtain. The containment of the

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Russians, apart from the maintenance of an adequate defense establishment, is stated to be basically a question of eliminating "areas of softness" in the non-Communist world. No suggestion is made as to methods of eliminating the soft areas; it is implied that time and the forces of nature will effect some sort of "organic" cure.

Mr. Kennan's book contains many important insights. He demonstrates that the increase in Russian power has resulted not from our own diplomatic mistakes but from its own military and economic strength. He argues irresistibly that McCarthyism creates the impression outside of the United States that we are a frightened and irresponsible nation, and therefore an unreliable ally. He shows that the policy of liberation is an invitation either to the slaughter of the anti-Communists in Eastern Europe or to the quick beginning of a third world war.

This book at many points seems to me superficial. If we consider, Kennan-like, the "naked facts" of power, in terms of population, resources and the feasible extent of military preparation, the democratic states are losing position and are in danger of being overwhelmed. The redress of the balance of power in our favor entails securing the defection of some of the Kremlin's allies or attracting the allegiance of neutral nations. Certainly the history of our relations with Tito's Yugoslavia since 1949 indicates that a diplomacy which is prepared to disregard ideological differences has a reasonable prospect of success. As Sir Robert Walpole stated during the middle of the eighteenth century, in explaining England's foreign policy: "The firmest bond of alliances is mutual interest. Men easily unite against him whom they have all reason to fear. . . ." From the standpoint of power politics, a realistic discussion of American diplomacy should concern itself with methods of splitting Mao from Malenkov, of securing the support of the Asiatic neutrals, of tightening the unity of the West European states. Mr. Kennan advocates realism, but he fails to give the term any meaningful content.

My second basic criticism of Mr. Kennan's book is its failure to state any positive aim for an American foreign policy. The doctrine of containment or the replacement of "soft spots" with situations of strength is a purely defensive approach. In this respect it parallels the actual foreign policy of the United States, which seeks merely to coalesce disparate interests to block the expansion of Soviet power. This is a necessary part of a program, but it is only one step. We cannot fashion a successful foreign policy merely in terms of anti-communism. We must seek to eliminate the conditions upon which communism breeds—poverty, despair, the resentment of ethnic discrimination, and the closed society. Our program surely must be to help develop in as many countries as possible those conditions of life which will remove the incentive to create revolution. Only thus can we convert the disadvantage of an Asia which is too populous and too nationalistic for us to control into the advantage of an Asia whose stake in its own independence will be too strong to permit Russian domination. Mr. Kennan infers that such a foreign policy is overambitious and must confront difficulties, but he presents no alternative except to suggest that we act in a dignified manner.

Thirdly, although Mr. Kennan is a highly moral individual, his book contends that there is a necessary dichotomy between policy and ethics. Such a contention seeks to make a virtue of the major limitation of America's foreign policy. We have permitted the Russians to disseminate without effective opposition the notion that *they* are the only advocates of peace, of racial equality, of opportunity for the dispossessed and underprivileged peoples of the earth. We are competing almost exclusively with money and merchandise.

In a contest for the support and sympathy of mass humanity, an appeal to the purse will never be as effective as an appeal to the person. We denigrate the position of the United States if we seek to conduct our foreign relations without reference to our domestic ideals. At the same time we gratuitously toss away our most effective weapon.

In the long run, there is nothing more

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effective than the force of an idea. It was the Declaration of Independence and not the grievances of the Massachusetts merchants that made the American Revolution a going concern. America's international position was strongest when it frankly sought to appeal to the hopes and aspirations of mankind. Woodrow Wilson's mistake, it seems to me, was not the enunciation of the Fourteen Points, but his failure or inability to implement his program. It is our task both to contain our opponents and to devise and proclaim a foreign policy which will give the "in between" states the same stake in democracy and representative government that the United States has. We must transcend our diplomatic tradition, and we must attempt to fashion the future rather than supinely await its dismal arrival.

Social History

THE REMARKABLE MR. JEROME. By Anita Leslie. Illustrated. *New York: Henry Holt & Company. 312 pp. $4.00.*

Reviewed by EDMUND FULLER

It might lay a fearful blight on an ordinary book to start off by calling it "social history," but in the truest sense that is what this book is, and it is so fascinating that nothing whatever could blight it. Anita Leslie brings a grace and skill to the writing that are fully worthy of the inherent interest of her materials. Her book reaches quite beyond a single thread of biography and even beyond the study of two extraordinary families of two countries. It evokes superbly the whole upper-level society of England and America in the middle and late nineteenth century. The book includes a good many highly interesting family photographs.

When Winston Churchill addressed Congress in 1941, he remarked that "if my father had been American and my mother British, instead of the other way round, I

EDMUND FULLER, novelist and critic, is the author of *Brothers Divided, A Star Pointed North, George Bernard Shaw* and other books.

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might have got here on my own." In the same spirit, Leonard Jerome need not have been the American grandfather of Sir Winston Churchill in order to qualify as a subject for biography; he could have got there on his own. For Jerome cut a wide swath as one of the foremost figures in America's mid-nineteenth-century era of financial moguls and high-stepping sportsmen. He was one of the dominant men in Wall Street for years. If he did not persist in that dominance—if, after gaining and losing great fortunes several times over, he relinquished the game—it was because it *was* one of his games and not a consuming obsession.

Jerome brought horse racing to New York and made it respectable and established the track that long bore his name. He bred horses so well known that when he gave a team of whites to one of his many loves, the gift was recognized by all the city. He was a connoisseur of vocal artists, including Jenny Lind (to whom Jennie Jerome owed her name) and Adelina Patti, and he nurtured the career of Minnie Hauk, America's first great native prima donna, rumored to be his daughter. He built up an art collection that was lost in a sea disaster. He was aboard the younger James Gordon Bennett's victorious yacht, *Henrietta*, in the first transatlantic yacht race. And not least, his three beautiful daughters were brilliant charmers. Jennie married Lord Randolph Churchill and became the mother of Sir Winston. Leonie was the great-grandmother of the author.

The scene shifts from Rochester to New York, to Trieste and Vienna, to Paris, to England, and to Ireland, always with a rich development of place and people. The Jeromes were great friends of the family of the Emperor Louis Napoleon, both during his reign and after the debacle of the Franco-Prussian War. The insights into this disaster are most unusual. Leonard's wife, Clara, and the girls got out of Paris just before the entrance of the Prussians. In one extraordinary scene, during the later Commune, we see Clara Jerome, amidst disorderly mobs in the gardens of the ruined Tuileries, buying at auction and carting off in a wheelbarrow the imperial dinner serv-

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ice adorned with golden *N*'s. It is still used by Sir Winston at Chartwell, and the monograms are scarcely scratched.

In the last third of the book, Jennie and Randolph Churchill take the front of the stage. Miss Leslie shows us the worried young lovers maneuvering two proudly obstinate families into consenting to the marriage. Jennie proceeds to overwhelm the Churchills. Then we see the emergence of Randolph as a brilliantly promising statesman who strangely, and without consultation even with his wife, makes a move that effectively ends his career and influence. We have glimpses of Queen Victoria, Disraeli, Prince Edward, and the workings of politics in Victorian England.

In one of several brief pictures, we see thirteen-year-old Winston (called "coppertop") after visiting Rider Haggard and receiving a book, writing: "I like *A.Q.* [*Allen Quartermain*] better than *King Solomon's Mines*; it is more amusing. I hope you will write a good many more books."

Jennie sparkles, whether playing piano duets with a young Pole named Paderewski, repressing her "ouch" when Victoria jabbed her with the pin while conferring the Order of the Crown of India, or winsomely asking surly workingmen to vote for her husband. She once asked Lord Falmouth, "Who on earth is this old demon?" and heard him say, "Why, it's my mother!" She adds a postscript to a letter to "Dearest Mama . . . couldn't you send a barrel of American eating apples to St. James Place? I'm so fond of them." After Randolph's strange political move she writes to Leonie, "I feel very sick at heart sometimes. It was such a splendid position to throw away."

Old Leonard, no longer a tycoon but still wealthy, quietly working to support his daughters (married or not) in the manner to which he had accustomed them, finally died in England. Once he tried reading the Old Testament, but shortly thrust it away, saying "What *horrible* people!" As we watch his incredible energies, his gambles, his affairs, we can only smile with patient Clara Jerome to hear Leonard ask, "Why are the girls so wild?" We can ruminate, too, over the shocking remark of a racing

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friend when Winston was born to Jennie and Randolph: "Interesting breeding. Stamina always goes through the dam, and pace through the sire."

Portrait of a Family

THE HOME LETTERS OF T. E. LAWRENCE AND HIS BROTHERS. Illustrated. *New York: The Macmillan Company. 731 pp. $10.00.*

Reviewed by LOUIS SIMPSON

The famous and mysterious figure of T. E. Lawrence will attract readers to this work, but the *Home Letters* are not only material to swell a myth: they are a family portrait and the record of a way of life which vanished in the trenches about Mons and Ypres.

There were five Lawrence brothers. T. E. (Ned to his family) became Lawrence of Arabia ("El-Orens, Destroyer of Engines"). He captured Damascus and held it until Allenby arrived; was responsible for making Faisal king of Iraq; wrote *The Seven Pillars of Wisdom*. Disillusioned by the inability of the Allies to fulfill their promises to the Arabs, he sought anonymity in the Tank Corps and the R. A. F.; and, in 1935, he was killed driving his motorcycle at high speed in a Dorsetshire lane. Lawrence's small body and enormous courage, his genius for guerrilla warfare, his almost uncanny sympathy with the Arab, his profound self-questionings, his vanity: these have nourished the myth. Nor will these letters dispel it. Most of them refer to his work as an archaeologist, before the war, when he toured Syria on foot in order to study the architecture of the Crusades and accompanied D. G. Hogarth to the Euphrates to excavate the site of Carchemish for the British Museum, pursuing ancient basalt reliefs with no less energy than he would expend on the destruction of a Turkish battalion in the desert war.

It is not surprising that the letters of T. E. Lawrence are the least revelatory in the collection. He did not want to be known. Only after much soul-searching did he publish *The Seven Pillars*, and he was happy to see the popular *Revolt in the Desert* withdrawn from publication. These letters, for the most part, are as attractive as the shards of pottery they describe. You would think this man interested only in bicycles, ruins and—of course—Arabs. The most revealing remark about him in these letters is made by his brother Frank, who writes (from the Western Front): "Has Ned sent any explanation of those photos of the dead men? I cannot imagine what he did it for. I could get plenty here if I had a camera and wanted to." At this time T. E. was up to his neck in desert fighting. Perhaps partly, but not entirely, because of the censorship, he tells almost nothing about these experiences—and, no doubt, the impulse to send photos of dead men home arose from a convulsion of the spirit. This archaeologist, collector of stamps and mender of bicycles found in war something —we can scarcely dare to guess what it was —that brought out his possibilities. He was never so active, so happy, again. The stories of his postwar life—as Private Shaw of the R. A. F. in India, or standing beside his portrait in an art gallery, waiting for someone to recognize him—are rather sad.

His brothers Will and Frank, whose letters fill half the volume, were killed in the war—Will, while on duty as aerial observer; Frank, in an infantry battle. T. E. had the genius, but the three brothers stand compact in an English garden. For Frank and Will, to paraphrase the laureate of their war, the Church clock stands at ten to three, and there is honey still for tea. They were devoted to their parents, were horrified at the thought of liquor, and hero-worshipped Ned. Will, in particular, had a secure sense of values. In a small French town, he remarks: "This hotel has some English people, genus bounder to judge by their language, in it . . ."; and, on a boat to Egypt: "The boat is very full, a lot of military men, of Egyptians and Indians, some missionary women (a Miss McNeile is on board I don't know where) and a large

LOUIS SIMPSON is an associate editor of the Bobbs-Merrill Company and an instructor of English at Columbia. He has published poetry and reviews in leading periodicals.

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group of bounders." It is doubtful that Will would have been able to deal with the Arabs.

Frank's letters are the warmest, and there are touches which show him as a most likable human being, who, given time, might have done much. Confronted with the Demon Rum, in the shape of a tot given to each soldier in the trenches, Frank at first held that the yearning of the soldier for a drink was "much more sad . . . than all the deaths in this war." Soon he discovered that a "thimbleful . . . of rum drunk just before lying down warms you enough to let you go to sleep." At the beginning, T. E. Lawrence was no more experienced in the ways of the world than Frank, but he was not taken off by a shell, and one may at least hazard an estimate of the capacity for growth in Frank from considering that of T. E.

The Lawrence letters show little humor. The brothers found the world curious, strange and exciting, but they did not seem to find it comic. Humor requires a letting-down of barriers, a willingness to surrender one's prejudices—and the prejudices to which they were bred were enchanting ones. Humor, worldliness, sophistication may not be, in the long run, qualities which are preferred when Doomsday sounds; and though recent civilization has preferred them, we are beginning to suspect that it may be for want of something better. With a second world war behind us, and a third to be reckoned with, we can no longer feel wiser than the men who were first confronted with this kind of catastrophe—and we may even be able to benefit from their heroism. Heroism—what connotations the word had for the generation between two wars!—connotations of stupidity, if not hypocrisy. But it implies other qualities too, as these lines from a letter by Frank, "not to be delivered till after my death," demonstrate:

I am writing this letter on the hypothesis that I have been killed, so will treat it that way. I am glad I have died, not so much for my country, as for all the many wrongs by which the war was mainly commenced and also which it inspired. The purpose for it all I do not think can be seen by us in this life but there is a

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purpose all the same. . . . Now I come to a harder part. I know you will grieve for me, and it is no use asking you not to; remember me as one who has gone before, not as one parted for ever. This present earthly life is after all a very limited space of time. Although I have been parted from you on this earth for 8 months, yet all the time I have felt in closer communion with you than when I was at home. . . . I do not think this communion will be broken now.

A Series of Tinkling Afternoons

HESTER LILLY AND TWELVE SHORT STORIES. By Elizabeth Taylor. *New York: Viking Press. 210 pp. $3.00.*

Reviewed by SIDNEY ALEXANDER

For years the French have been printing on the advertising strips of their editions of Hemingway, Dos Passos, et al.: *Traduit de l'américain*. Slowly that notion is taking root in Italy too, although it is still not uncommon to hear:

"You are English?"

"No, American."

"Oh well, it's the same thing."

How *not* the same thing it is, one realizes anew while reading this collection of stories by Elizabeth Taylor. For if the American writer's hallmark is vigor, often without art, our British penmen and penladies are likely to offer us art without vigor—barring, of course, the inevitable exceptions. Mrs. Taylor's novelette and short stories are all so well-bred, so trimly achieved, so sensitively written, so intelligent. No one ever knocks over a tray or spills a drop of tea in this series of tinkling afternoons. Even the frank sex-talk (this *is* the twentieth century) is so nicely minted. There are no holds barred, and yet one feels that no one has really taken hold.

Several of these stories were first published in *The New Yorker*, and they combine that magazine's peculiar matter-of-factness with a pinch of British irony. The stories seem to be saying: "Here is the way things are, let us laugh, but not with our bellies; let us pity, but without tears." *Civilized* is the word for Elizabeth Taylor.

The title novelette plays delicate female notes on a familiar triangle. Into the placid life of the headmaster of a boys' school comes his cousin, twenty years his junior, and fated to fall in love with the father-image of her protector. The headmaster's wife, Muriel, feels her position threatened by the young girl, and her jealousy leads to the gambit of an almost-affair with the school rake and the destruction of her imagined rival by a series of clean and below-the-belt blows. The wife conquers, the girl marries a dullard instructor of her own age; but Muriel has saved her marriage only to learn that there was nothing to save. If it continues to stand, it will be like a dead tree filled with cement.

The slow burn of an unjustifiable jealousy, the subtleties of feminine in-fighting, the frightened flights of Hester Lilly into the arms of one of those professional eccentric old ladies who inhabit Hitchcock movies and British novels—all this Elizabeth Taylor manages with genuine skill and Jamesian obliqueness. The old eccentric in her thatched hut seems unnecessary; but she, after all, is just another refugee from *Alice in Wonderland*, just as the endemic tea party that tinkles through English fiction seems always to be echoing that first great mad tea party in *Alice*.

When Elizabeth Taylor puts her scalpel to the tissues of the middle-aged wife, she can make you see the twitching of nerves under a relentless light. She is indeed at her best in the pink, scented corridors of female psyches. Here she can make her characters quiver. Yet though we see, we do not quiver with them. For this author's is a fine lute with few sympathetic strings.

"Spry Old Character" is first-rate in every way. The lively, horse-playing old cockney who goes blind late in life and is bored to tears at the country home for the blind to which he has been sent would have gotten along fine with Joyce Cary's Gully Jimson. Listen to this sensitive evocation of a blind

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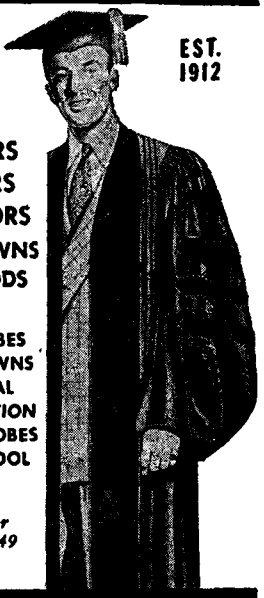

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man's world as he wanders alone from the home for the first time:

"He wandered alone, a little scared, down the drive and out onto the highroad. He followed the brick wall along and turned with it into a narrow lane with a soft surface. . . . The hedges dripped with moisture although it was not raining. All about that neighbourhood there was a resinous scent in the air. . . . Harry's tread was now muffled by pine needles, and a fir cone dropped on his shoulder, startling him wretchedly. Every sound in the hedgerow unnerved him; he imagined small bright-eyed animals watching his progress. From not following the curve of the hedge sharply enough, he ran his face against wet hawthorne twigs. He felt giddiness, as if he were wandering in a circle. . . ."

Beautifully carried out in less than five pages is "A Sad Garden." Reminiscent of Katherine Mansfield in her precise choice of obliquities, Elizabeth Taylor summons up the tragedy of love lost and the hysteria whereby this loss knifes into the present.

"Oasis of Gaiety" begins well enough with some deft brush strokes depicting the absurdity of a fifty-year-old lost generation attempting to behave like twenty-year-old Bohemians. But, as in so many of the stories, the author soon gets deflected into a kind of studied pointlessness that is the trademark of many *New Yorker* stories. One of the pieces is entitled "The Beginning of a Story." Unfortunately, too many of these stories are just that.

"Swan-Moving," however, is a gem. Unaccountably, coming from no one knows whence, a swan settles amidst the rubbish

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of a dirty old pond in a village that "lacked even the knowledge of its own ugliness." For some reason or other, the swan decides to remain, and children and their fathers bicycling to work begin to feed it. "Even in its charity, the village was backward and untidy, yet the swan coming to it out of the fog and remaining as he did, stirred its imagination and pride." After a while, the presence of the swan begins to work slow miracles of improvement in the neglected village. The grimy cottages around which had lain scattered the rusty old bicycles and thrown-away iron bedsteads begin to preen and paint themselves into a state of shining whiteness after the example of the mysterious visitor. But sometimes even "the idea of charm" goes too far. "A guilty tawdriness was its expression, naïve and peasant-like, but here without steadying ritual or tradition. The vicar, having once despaired at apathy, now winced at exuberance. . . ."

Then, after a stretch of wonderful but rainless weather, the pond threatens to dry up. In a scene with rich ritualistic overtones, the author describes the conveyance of the swan to a new-found pond. But after the villagers depart, their ritual done, the swan flies off into the setting sun, never to return. The god has served his mission of awakening the latent sense of beauty.

This story together with "Spry Old Character" and "A Sad Garden" make the volume worth while. One wishes only that Elizabeth Taylor were not always in such perfect command of her craft. She is a fine professional writer, no doubt about it; her skill bespeaks long years of hard work at her craft. But she fails to seize us because she herself is not seized. Artisan-perfect, she tends to pall, especially in those stories shaped of those too-familiar ingredients of British narrative: the inevitable vicar, the endemic tea party, the bewildering botanical vocabulary, the dry reserved wit, the pub talk and cockney talk, the post-buzz-bomb drabness and chin-upness, the old lady eccentric, and the names straight down to us from the eighteenth-century comedy of manners—Lady Luna, Miss Despenser and, of course, Sybil. It's admirable how much juice Elizabeth Taylor manages to squeeze out of this pulpy material. And when she does find her theme she soars like her own swan.

One only wishes that she would knock over a lovely cup of tea once in a while.

Brief Comments

IS THE COMMON MAN TOO COMMON? Joseph Wood Krutch et al. *Oklahoma.* $2.75.

The common man in question is today's counterpart to Plato's "democratic man" or to the "mass man," so vividly described by Ortega. The common man is not to be defined in terms of social class: he is neither the "working man" nor the "poor man." The common man is common precisely because he manifests no individuality. His personality is an abstraction, sacrificed to the denominator of the average; he wants to be "just like everybody." His is a life of consuming passivity—with one dangerous exception: he arrogantly insists that all excellence be reduced to his level of mediocrity. As described by D. W. Brogan, one of the participants in this symposium, the common man is "egalitarian." Another contributor, Joseph Wood Krutch, also affirms the initial question and warns that egalitarian emphasis on quantity soon permeates the national soul to the extent of transcendence of inferior modes of thought, and culture is finally rendered impossible.

There are other contributors who avoid the issue completely. Norman Cousins, for example, merely bemoans the fact that the common man does not properly appreciate the artist. Arthur Mayer advises "intellectuals" to begin patronizing the cinema as the remedy for inferior quality in that medium.

A more interesting approach is found in articles by A. Whitney Griswold, John W. Dodds, and C. W. de Kiewiet. They affirm the inferiority of the common man but urge that the phenomenon has been partially prompted by the refusal of higher institutions—colleges, for example—to accept their responsibility as directing minorities.

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As this discussion indicates, the book presents no novel ideas. It does present some very important ideas in a novel and interesting form.

L. A. F.

THE MAN IN THE THICK LEAD SUIT. By Daniel Lang. *Oxford. $3.50.*

This collection of ten articles from *The New Yorker* is a detached, semi-amused report on how people are reacting to the nation's accelerating military-research program. Most of the articles are concerned with human sidelights on the coming of the atomic age. Citizens of Las Vegas, sixty-five miles from the Yucca Flats atomic proving ground, have done their best to live lightly in the shadows of those pink mushroom-shaped clouds. One haberdasher placed a sign outside his shop: ATOM BOMB SOUVENIRS—FREE! The souvenirs, glass fragments of blast-shattered windows, were all distributed within half an hour.

The book contains many such anecdotes. It also includes interviews with scientists whose consciences are upset by what they are doing. One atomic physicist has become an Episcopal deacon and may "get out of science entirely." The ex-leader of the Nazis' rocket program, presently working for the Army in Alabama, goes to church regularly now. These men and others are precise and certain about physical principles but as confused as the rest of us about the implications and impact of their work. The ethics of the atomic age seems to be too complex for meaningful analysis. But at least we can describe what we cannot fathom. This is an age for journalists, and *The Man in the Thick Lead Suit* is high-grade journalism.

J. P.

AN AMERICAN IN INDIA. By Saunders Redding. *Bobbs-Merrill. $3.50.*

This is another book about India written by an American who spent four strenuous months lecturing, talking and answering questions in the cause of international understanding at the request of the State Department. It is important not only because the author is a good observer and a good writer, but because he is a Negro and the color of his skin was a passport to the intimate and candid confidences of Indians, the most intensely color-conscious people in the world.

Indian intellectuals, says Mr. Redding, whether Communist or democratic, are alike in their dislike and distrust of the United States, their suspicion of American imperialism, their conviction of American immorality and their bitter prejudice against everything American. Much of this feeling is based on ignorance and traditional anti-Westernism; much is straight Communist doctrine or Communist-influenced.

This is a thoughtful, disturbing book about a critical situation which so far has not been understood, and which must be understood if it is to be combatted intelligently.

O. P.

URUGUAY: Portrait of a Democracy. By Russell H. Fitzgibbon. *Rutgers. $5.75.*

Uruguay, a small country of pleasant plains and lovely beaches, has had its bad times; and throughout the nineteenth century it was the scene of broils between Argentina and Brazil and of acrid and continuous party strife. Not until the twentieth century did it find order and stability. José Batlle y Ordóñez, President from 1903-07 and again from 1911-15, one of the ablest men produced by Latin America, was largely responsible. Under his influence the state developed railroading, public utilities, insurance, meat packing, and other enterprises. He encouraged education and fair representation to minority groups. A "collegiate executive" was created, with a Council of State representing the chief parties and ruling the nation, the President becoming no more than a presiding officer.

These innovations in economics and government are working smoothly today, despite constant annoyance from the *peronistas* across the Río de la Plata. The Uruguayan people show no signs of yielding to the persuasions of Communist leftists on the one hand or ultra-nationalist rightists on the other. They are the most literate

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of Latin American peoples. Their country pays its bills and starts no fights with its neighbors, minds its own business and votes in honest elections.

R. D.

BEYOND THE HUNDREDTH MERIDIAN: John Wesley Powell and the Second Opening of the West. By Wallace Stegner. With an introduction by Bernard DeVoto. Illustrated. *Houghton Mifflin. $6.00.*

In this important study of the greatest among the scientists who achieved intellectual mastery of the Far West in the decades after the Civil War, Wallace Stegner lifts what might seem a merely antiquarian subject into the main stream of American history. The author sees Powell as "the culmination of an American type" (to which also belonged Lincoln and Mark Twain): a self-taught amateur who attained international eminence in several fields of science and became one of the shapers of the society we live in. Powell's chief accomplishments were to establish the tradition and the administrative machinery of federal support for scientific research and to devise a "blueprint for a dry-land democracy," which was brushed aside by hostile economic interests in his day but has had to be revived in ours as the basis of conservation and reclamation programs in the arid West. The story of his career leads from a Midwestern boyhood through the Grand Canyon of the Colorado in the breakneck adventure that made him a national figure, to the even more perilous milieu of Washington in the Gilded Age, where he guided the early development of the United States Geological Survey. Mr. Stegner's prose has an unfailing verve despite the burden of documentation it carries, and the narrative is enriched by maps and by sumptuous illustrations selected from early drawings, paintings and photographs of the Western terrain.

H. N. S.

THE ROOSEVELT FAMILY OF SAGAMORE HILL. By Hermann Hagedorn. Illustrated. *Macmillan. $5.00.*

The days at Sagamore Hill, home of the Oyster Bay Roosevelts, were crammed from dawn until dark with exuberant activity, physical and intellectual: there were picnics and tramps through the woods; boating excursions and camps under the stars, with bedtime stories told by a master; pony rides and pillow fights; sessions of reading history and poetry aloud by the open fire; lively table talk, of politics and literature, of San Juan Hill and big game and the plains of the American West.

Mr. Hagedorn's account of this strenuous life is primarily a story "of a man and his wife, the house they loved and the six children they brought up in it," told lovingly, uncritically, and with a tinge of nostalgia for a time past. The Rough Rider himself sometimes seems the leader of the gang, the bubbling troop of lively little boys and girls who made the White House a temporary extension of Sagamore Hill. One feels the powerful impact of his dominating personality so strongly that one suffers the same exhaustion felt by the frequent visitors to the Long Island estate.

This period piece is a delightful one when the author follows his avowed purpose, but his enthusiasm and devotion to the memory of Theodore Roosevelt lead him at times down devious paths into incomplete views of the wider scene of the times and into unbalanced political judgments.

V. W. N.

REBEL ROSE: Life of Rose O'Neal Greenhow, Confederate Spy. By Ishbell Ross. Illustrated. *Harper. $4.00.*

To the growing portrait gallery of persons who played roles in the tragic drama of the Civil War is now added the first full-length biography of the South's most accomplished intrigante and dangerous spy.

Rose O'Neal's girlhood at her aunt's Capitol Hill boardinghouse; her marriage to and subsequent travels with lawyer, linguist and State-Department official Robert Greenhow; her family connections and personal friendships with influential social and political figures such as James Buchanan and John C. Calhoun: all these circumstances, together with her natural

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endowments of dashing beauty, verve, eloquence, wit and resourcefulness, united to give her superior equipment for her role of *agent provocateur* in the hostilities.

Functioning boldly and openly, through a combination of "seduction and foresight" and a ruthlessness in using anyone to gain the ends of the Confederacy, she became the center of an espionage ring so successful that it was largely responsible for the Southern victory at Manassas. The passionate resolution with which Rose threw herself into the Confederate cause (and, one suspects, her self-dramatizing tendencies) sustained her through the grim days of her imprisonment; and her eventual death in the service of that cause provided a fitting end to her career.

It is regrettable that in spite of the great wealth of external detail which Miss Ross's researches give us, we so seldom are able to see very deeply into the springs of character of this complex being who was "a beauty, a wit, a patriot, a spy, an affectionate wife and mother, a siren, a scholar, a writer, but first and to the end, a woman who had 'used every capacity with which God had endowed her' in support of the Confederacy."

V. W. N.

TELL FREEDOM. By Peter Abrahams. *Knopf. $4.00.*

With this book Peter Abrahams solidifies his reputation as a writer of sensitive prose. *Tell Freedom* is autobiographical and covers the first twenty-one years of the young writer's life. They were not easy years. His Ethiopian father died when Peter was a child, and his Cape Coloured mother was forced to divide her four children among relatives and friends. Peter was sent to the Elsburg location, where his new guardians worked on the farm of a white man. Here the boy learned that the non-white people —natives, Cape Coloured and Indians—of South Africa were not free.

The rest of this beautiful and moving book is concerned with Abrahams' personal quest for freedom. Though it was a hard and sometimes harrowing search, the author writes of it without bitterness—indeed, with tenderness and love. There is the young Jewish girl who introduced him to literature and inspired him to go to school. There is his first love, the Cape Coloured girl, Anne; and his second, Jane, the white girl who introduced him to Marxism. There are the teachers at Grace Dieu College (for "coloureds") and the natives who banded together in the Bantu Men's Social Centre. In their various ways, all of them helped Abrahams. But in the end he came to know that the land he loved, that shaped his heart and his "wayward dreams," would never grant him freedom; and so the book closes with the young writer setting out for England.

J. S. R.

THE DANCING BEAR: Berlin de Profundis. By Frances Faviell. Illustrated. *Norton. $3.50.*

In *The Dancing Bear*, Frances Faviell, wife of a British major in Berlin, has painted an interesting portrait of a patrician Berlin family, the Altmans, whose individual struggles to survive, in spirit and in flesh, the postwar pandemonium end tragically in frustration, corruption or death.

Apparently there is no arguing the authenticity of Mrs. Faviell's observations, since few of them are second-hand. She has, she says, gone and seen for herself, even the East German parade for Communist President Pieck, where she was nearly crushed to death by the "infectious madness" of the "absolutely thrilled" crowd—a crowd which, ten pages later, has turned, to one's relief, into a "desperate and furious mob" tearing down the posters of Herr Pieck in a rage.

If this allows for a certain duality in the German soul, with which no one would argue, the rest of Mrs. Faviell's book does not. Although she is far too compassionate to subscribe to the saying that the only good German is a dead German, the fact remains that all the good Germans of her acquaintance die. Of the twelve main characters she describes, the score turns out to be: three dead, four postwar Nazis, one Communist, two dissolute, one too old to matter, and one in the United States. The rest are background material.

Those of Mrs. Faviell's reviewers who

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have been induced by the author's unquestionable talent and intelligence to accept her distressing average as a valid cross section of postwar Germans are in for a pleasant surprise: at least one in every dozen Berliners cannot be fitted into it.

This reviewer, a native German and until recently a resident of Berlin, feels sorry and baffled: sorry for Frances Faviell, whose perceptive and compassionate eye had to peer at Berlin from behind the bars of the comparatively gilded Allied Occupation cage, and whose field of vision was therefore, by necessity, restricted; baffled by the *unqualified* praise accorded *The Dancing Bear* by distinguished American book critics.

S. R.

MELBOURNE. By David Cecil. Illustrated. *Bobbs-Merrill. $5.00.*

The first half of this full-length biography was published in 1939 as *The Young Melbourne.* The second half covers the last two decades of his life, "The Years of Influence," when he served as prime minister under William IV and at the opening of Victoria's reign. In combining both parts in a single volume, David Cecil has realized his original intention and has completed a biography that is an acknowledged masterpiece.

The year 1828 marked a dividing point in Melbourne's career. Before that date he was William Lamb, a charming, witty, well-born and somewhat indolent English gentleman. His marriage to the unhappy and neurotic Lady Caroline Lamb was an ordeal he bore with admirable forbearance until her death early in 1828. A few months later, when the first Viscount Melbourne died, William succeeded to the title. He had already entered politics and thenceforth politics became his major interest in life.

"Melbourne," David Cecil affirms, "deserves some of the credit for the fact that England, alone of European countries in the nineteenth century, succeeded in getting rid of the old regime without a revolution." His political assets were good connections, good sense and good humor. Even in office he remained himself, urbane, lightly cynical, independent and remarkably human.

The most interesting relationship, political and personal, of his later years was his friendship with the young Victoria. As prime minister it was his duty to advise her, but duty swiftly blended into a chivalrous devotion. Their friendship passed through two phases, and Cecil's account of it forms the most moving section of this eloquent and perceptive study.

G. B.

DOCTOR TO THE ISLANDS. By Tom and Lydia Davis. Illustrated. *Atlantic-Little, Brown. $4.50.*

This is the record of a dozen years of an unusual home and of hard, valuable work, from the day in 1940 when the Davises were married in New Zealand, through Tom's service as a medical officer in Rarotonga, to their hair-raising journey by small boat across the Pacific and on to Boston for Tom's advanced studies.

As a story of a marriage, told alternately by the partners, the book is reticent without being stilted. Touched with humor, it offers glimpses, rather than analyses, of the relation between the doctor, superbly competent, self-assured, absorbed in his fight for the physical, psychological and economic well-being of his own people, and the domesticated, yet individualistic, wife who gamely subordinates her own desires and interests to his.

As the story of a job well done, here is a most interesting study of a strong personality contributing substantially to the change from an ethnocentric, paternalistic and tradition-bound administration of European responsibilities in Polynesia to a genuine effort, educational and technical, toward preparing a proud, charming people to guide their own affairs. As an addition to the formidable literature of the South Seas, this is a realistic, yet appealing account of that paradise with problems.

E. A. W.

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THE LOVE LETTERS OF PHYLLIS MCGINLEY. By Phyllis McGinley. *Viking. $3.00.*

Love letters generally make good reading. But when they are written by Phyllis McGinley, the scope of the genre is expanded. Happily, Miss McGinley is not too selective in the assignment of her affections; she loves, or at least cares about, almost everything: New York City, curly hair, her children and home, diversity, museums, her neighbors. Even Mr. Eliot and his *Confidential Clerk* have been blessed by her attention: "On the stage the actors come and go/Whose heir is which they do not know."

The fact that Miss McGinley never seems to miss a beat in following the lively step of her time is at once a strength and a weakness. For in ten years who will understand her lines on television or Lucille Ball's "Eight-Million-Dollar Baby": "Now I shudder to think how unto infinity/Will roll the story of the Arnaz trinity."

But when spending a few hours with Phyllis McGinley, one is not too inclined to brood about the future. Indeed, one wonders if posterity will not be a rather assured and pleasant thing if the present is approached with such wisdom and warmth.

B. S.

A FABLE. By William Faulkner. *Random. $4.75.*

This book has greatness in it, as well as faults which prevent it from achieving greatness. It contains some of Faulkner's finest writing—and some of the worst contrivances ever used to destroy a potentially great novel.

At this date there is no need to halloo or celebrate Faulkner's merits as a writer. It is timely to note, however, that his stubborn poetry and his remarkable ability to develop character in depth may be found in almost any corner of this current work. It is doubtful, for example, if he has ever before created a rhetoric as eloquent as that contained in *A Fable*'s final and passionate declaration on the folly and indomitability of man.

Hard pressed against these virtues are almost inexplicable faults. The chores of introduction and preparation are so carefully and repetitiously performed that this ambitious novel is almost cut down before it reaches full stride toward its objective. It is scarred at every point by useless adornments in the way of allegorical parallels that greatly exceed any need of the reader or any requirement of the story. The magnificent climax is undermined by a stray and ruinous afterpiece, so pointless, so unnecessary, that it comes within good distance of destroying the entire work.

Thus, the good and the bad knock each other about in unusual fashion. It is a puzzling, interesting and valuable book.

H. W.

THE GO-BETWEEN. By L. P. Hartley. *Knopf. $3.50.*

"Who started it all . . .whose fault was it?" By the time some of the answers become clear in this account of twelve-year-old Leo Colston's summer at the home of a school friend and his role as the "go-between" in the passionate love affair of the young lady of the house and a neighborhood farmer, it is too late for the knowledge to affect the outcome.

The story, told in the first person as a flash back to the summer of 1900, is framed in a prologue which anticipates and an epilogue which pronounces the tragedy of wasted lives, but particularly that of the once-young Leo who sees all too clearly the effect that his first encounter with love had upon him and knows that if it had not been for the summer, "I should not be sitting in this drab, flowerless room, where the curtains were not even drawn to hide the cold rain beating on the windows. . . . I should be sitting in another room, rainbow-hued, looking not into the past but into the future; and I should not be sitting alone."

Structurally and stylistically Mr. Hartley's novel is substantial. But it is the story itself, skillfully woven around his sound and frightening knowledge of children and adults, which gives the book power and stature.

B. S.

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The Reader Replies . . . . . .

THE READER REPLIES *carries miscellaneous comments by readers and authors on various articles which have appeared in the magazine. All communications should be addressed to: The Editor,* THE AMERICAN SCHOLAR, *Phi Beta Kappa Hall, Williamsburg, Va., and should not exceed 300 words in length except on request. Because of limitations of space, we cannot guarantee to print all letters received.*—EDITOR.

Brickbats and Glass

I am still dopey from amazement! Shades of crusty old Sydney Smith and his vitriolic sneer, *Who Reads an American Book?* Imagine it, if you can—an Englishman in this year of grace, a dyed-in-the-wool, one hundred per cent, to-the-manor-born Englishman daring to heave a few dozen brickbats through that dome of many-colored glass which for five hundred years has arched the hothouse of British insular thought! It's almost unbelievable, and stands out like Mars at perihelion. And what a neat panning, what a round-the-clock lambasting, what a whip-lash shellacking Reginald Reynolds is certain to get at the quivering hands of his British confreres! Already, I opine, the dense, foggy atmosphere above London is reeking with such choice morsels, such fat, juicy epithets as "Apostate!" "Sycophantic traducer!" "Bloody liar!" "Arrant trimmer and time-server!" "Boot-licking lackey!" Talk about Roman holidays and Donnybrook Fairs! Won't it be fun to watch the fur fly when Francis Wyndham puts on the gloves? Brother, don't miss the forthcoming issues of *The London Magazine.* Are we nearing the end of a crazy critical era? Maybe after all, London Bridge is falling down, falling down, falling down. . . .

LABAN LACY RICE
Winter Park, Florida

Side-Swipe?

Ian Wilson, under the title "On First Looking into America" [AS: Summer, 1954], takes a side-swipe at "stereotyped art and music in the 'People's Democracies.'"

Does he know of any better music composed during the past twenty years than that of Prokofiev, of Shostakovich, of Khachaturian? All the important new music we have had, during a couple of decades, has come from the Soviet Union.

EMERSON STRINGHAM
Kerrville, Texas

★ ★ ★

Mr. Stringham implies that I made a purely gratuitous attack on Soviet art simply because it is fashionable to condemn all things Communist. Yet the context of this "side-swipe" shows that my expressed purpose in every instance was to stress a fault, not its nationality.

It is a matter of personal taste whether or not I consider Ireland, Walton, Vaughan Williams, Bliss, Bax and Britten (to be "nationalist," momentarily!) greater than Prokofiev, Shostakovich and Khachaturian. And it is at least debatable whether "*all* the important new music . . . has come from the Soviet Union." Such a view seems strangely blinkered.

Maybe a definition of terms will confirm or eliminate the grounds of difference between us. In using the word *stereotyped* I had in mind the evident desire of the Soviet Communist party to make all art conform to a pre-determined (political) pattern and purpose. In 1946 a Central Committee resolution emphasized the dependence of literature on politics. This was vigorously enforced by Zhdanov, who frequently quoted Lenin's statement: "Literature must become party literature. Down with non-party literature, down with literary supermen. Literary work must become

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a part of all proletarian endeavor." The purpose of literature is to "portray the Soviet Man and his moral qualities in full force and completeness." This is no mere negative censorship; it is a positive instruction to the artist on what and how to produce. "Socialist Realism" became the only acceptable style, as attacks on deviationists made all too clear. Nor did music escape this drive to conformity. In 1948, Prokofiev, Shostakovich and Khachaturian were all censured for "formalistic tendencies"—and this was Shostakovich's second offense (his first, in 1936, being for "bourgeois tendencies")—and their unacceptable works were withdrawn by the state monopoly of publication and performance.

Does Mr. Stringham still think I was unjustified in using the word *stereotyped?*

IAN WILSON
Westport, Connecticut

Conservation Is Not Enough

Joseph Wood Krutch's article "Conservation Is Not Enough" [AS: Summer, 1954] demands comment. Mr. Krutch apparently feels that we must have some moral justification for using the natural resources of the earth. He asks why we are *permitted* to do this. He might better ask why we are permitted to live.

At an early stage of human history mankind was offered a choice: either he could live a strictly pastoral existence at a very low level of population or he could live a more refined existence—refined in the sense that every individual does not devote ten hours a day to gathering food—at a substantially higher level of population, provided that he made use of the exhaustible resources of the earth. Our ancestors made the latter choice and in so doing created a situation where there can be no retreat to the pastoral state without the elimination of a substantial fraction of the earth's population.

Now if Mr. Krutch does not wish to criticize the human drive to reproduce in large numbers, he has little right to criticize men for attempting to control nature, i.e., utilize natural resources. In fact, if we were less successful in controlling nature (so that our struggle for food were more difficult), we would not be in a position to "live and let live" to even the small extent that we do now. For to "live and let live" is a luxury which can be dispensed only by those who are well provided for themselves.

Our ancestors have placed us in a position where we must use the earth's resources. Conservation is not enough because it can only slow down this process. This, however, is not quite so hopeless a situation as Mr. Krutch would have us think. The material resources of the earth are never "used up"; they are transformed, dissipated or scattered but never destroyed. If enough energy is available, they can be collected and retransformed to be useful again.

Energy is the key to this recycling process. If enough energy can be made available, we shall have the solution to Mr. Krutch's conundrum. Control of the atom is a risk in the presence of the politically immature, but without it we would face a catastrophe of far greater than bomb proportions when energy from fossil fuels is no longer available. Indeed, control of the atom may allow us to take the first step toward an equilibrium relationship with the resources of the earth, both animate and inanimate.

The problems raised by Mr. Krutch are still too new to be seen in perspective by more than a few. To obscure them with a haze of sentimentality and moralization as he does is certainly not a step toward a solution.

ROBERT B. GORDON
New Haven, Connecticut

★ ★ ★

Mr. Gordon evidently assumes that man's "right to live" includes both his right and his duty to multiply his numbers indefinitely until he either starves himself to death or finds himself packed so tightly upon this globe that he can neither move freely nor permit anything to exist unless it contributes efficiently to his own survival. I do not believe that he has this right, for the "sentimental" reason that other creatures have also a right to live and that he

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is happier when he permits them to. I do not believe that it would be prudent to try to enforce the so-called right, for the practical reason that he would ultimately reach a condition where his humanity and probably his physical existence would be extinguished. To anyone who wants to know the case for this second contention I recommend Harrison Brown's *The Challenge of Man's Future* and Sir Charles Galton Darwin's *The Next Million Years*. I do not suppose that my essay outlines practical methods for avoiding a calamity which may be unavoidable. I thought it might make clearer the road which we have taken and the dead end to which it leads.

JOSEPH WOOD KRUTCH
Tucson, Arizona

Books and the Reading Public

The symposium in THE AMERICAN SCHOLAR [Spring, 1954] on the new developments in the book publishing world was interesting and suggestive, but perhaps it left something to be desired on the constructive side. It seems to me to point up the need of a second symposium by the same or another representative group on the ways and means of increasing the number of book-readers and book-purchasers. That there are such ways, I am convinced. May I venture to direct attention here, briefly, to some of these?

We need and can have more branch libraries in our cities, especially of the second class. If the readers we want cannot be brought to the central public library, the library should be brought to the public in neighborhood district, in suburbs, etc. This is a question of finance and tax rates, I take it. The great foundations, however, might help.

In the second place, we need and should have more and better bookstores. In this field there are promising opportunities to improve, and the young college graduates who are not committed to the legal, medical or engineering professions would do well to explore these. Potential buyers of books should be encouraged, welcomed, aided and tactfully guided—and this is *not* the case today in our bookstores. Possible buyers should not be watched or rushed. Browsing should be facilitated, and reviews of books from the leading papers and magazines should be clipped, posted and shown to visitors.

Publishing firms can do more than they now do to help the bookstores and enable them to try progressive experiments.

Isn't all this material for a profitable symposium?

VICTOR S. YARROS
La Jolla, California

Two Bouquets

May a reader of one decade's standing offer two bouquets?

The enlightened stand of most of your contributors in the present controversy which threatens our traditional values and even our freedoms has been characterized by a singular fair-mindedness and, on occasion, wit. Despite the difficulty of the times the majority of the essayists have indeed generated more light than heat.

In another vein, the book reviews and, just as important, the choice of material for reviews have been singularly happy. For those of us whose nonprofessional reading is by the quarter rather than by the week or month, these critiques offer a welcome guide.

MARTIN L. BELLER
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

★ ★ ★

I enjoyed reading the Winter, 1953-54 issue of THE AMERICAN SCHOLAR, particularly the articles by Marten ten Hoor, David Riesman and Fraser Darling.

For me—teaching in technical fields and working closely with industry—the contents of THE AMERICAN SCHOLAR provide an excellent counterbalance. Reading "Education for Privacy" in the privacy of my study was a delightful experience. The author states his points well. For me personally, it's more than an echo from the Sorbonne, Heidelberg, Lausanne.

PAUL F. MUELLET
Seattle, Washington

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And we shall have snow,
And long nights for winter-time reading . . .

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